REMARKS

Upon a late

DISCOURSE

OF

FREE-THINKING:

IN A

LETTER to N. N.

BY

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS.

Eſt genus hominum, qui eſſe primos ſe omnium rerum volunt, Nec ſunt.——
——An audes
Perſonam formare novam? Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, & ſibi conſtet.

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To my very Learned and Honour'd

FRIEND N. N.

At *LONDON*,

GREAT-BRITAIN.

SIR,

YOUR many and great Civilities to me ſince our firſt acquaintance in the *Low-Countries*, and the kind office you then did me in conveying my Annotations on MENANDER to the Preſs, but above all your Taciturnity and Secreſy, that have kept the true Author of that Book undiſcover'd hitherto, if not unqueſs'd; have encourag'd me to ſend you theſe preſent REMARKS, to be communicated to the Public, if you think they deſerve it: in which I doubt not but you'l exhibit a new proof of your wonted Friendſhip and Fidelity.

What occaſion'd you this trouble, was the freſh arrival of a Country-Man of ours from your Happy Iſland; who brought along with him a ſmall Book, juſt publiſh'd before he left *London*; which (as he ſays) made very much Diſcourſe there. He knowing me to be a great admirer of the Books of your Nation, and to have competently learn'd both to write and ſpeak your Language during my long ſtay at *Oxford*, made me a then agreeable Preſent of that new *Diſcourſe of Free-thinking*.

I, who (as you well know) have been train'd up and exercis'd in *Free Thought* from my Youth, and whoſe borrow'd Name PHILELEUTHERUS ſufficiently denotes me *a Lover of Freedom*, was pleas'd not a little at ſo promiſing a Title: and (to confeſs to you my own vanity) could not help ſome aſpiring Thoughts from preſſing and intruding on me, That this *Riſing and Growing* Society might one day perhaps admit into their Roll a humble Foreigner Brother, *a Free-thinker of Leipſic*.

But when once the Curtain was drawn, and by a peruſal of the Book the Private Cabbala and myſterious Scheme within became viſible and open; that Expectation and the Deſire it ſelf immediately vaniſh'd. For under the ſpecious ſhow of *Free-thinking*, a *Set* and *Syſtem of Opinions* are all along inculcated and dogmatically taught; *Opinions* the moſt *ſlaviſh*, the moſt abject and baſe, that Human Nature is capable of. And upon thoſe terms, neither you, I fancy, nor I ſhall ever make our Court for admittance into their Club.

This irkſome diſappointment, that my fine Preſent ſhould dwindle ſo far, as to be below the value of waſt Paper, rais'd a haſty Reſolution in me to write ſome *Remarks* on it. And I find I ſhall have much the ſame Imployment, as I had before on *Menander*. For I am here too to deal in *Fragments:* the main of the Book, being a Rhapſody of Paſſages out of Old and New Writers, rak'd and ſcrap'd together by the joint labour of many hands, to abuſe all Religion. *O infelices laborum!* Had I been at their Conſultation, I could have furniſh'd them with many more: and I will now inform them, that if they will read all *Galen*, and the *Greek* Commentators on *Ariſtotle*, they may find two or three Paſ-

Paſſages, much fitter for their purpoſe, than any they have brought.

As for the Gatherings out of your *Engliſh* Authors, moſt of which are modern, and many ſtill alive; I know you will not expect from me that I ſhould examin thoſe Citations. The Books are not to be found in *Leipſic*, having not yet paſſed the Seas to Us: the Writers are but private Men, and even Your Church is not anſwerable, for what they ſay or print: not to add that I, by Birth and Education a *Lutheran*, am not concern'd in any particular Doctrines of your Church, which affect not Chriſtianity in common. However if our *Free-thinker* has ſhown no more Ability nor Sincerity, where he alleges the *Engliſh* Writers, than where *Latin* or *Greek*; he will ſoon have a juſt Anſwer by ſome of your own Divines.

I ſhould now enter upon my Remarks, but that I am firſt to excuſe my ſelf, why I give you not the Stile of Honour, cuſtomary in *England*, I mean, the Title of REVEREND. The Author indeed has made me ſick of it, by his flat inſipid Drollery in tacking it to every Name he mentions, ſix times together perhaps within as few lines. Can this now paſs for Wit among you? Is this reckon'd good Breeding or Urbanity? What's become of the old *Engliſh* Taſt and Fineſſe? Who may not be witty at this cheap rate, if he dares but be impudently dull? Give a looſe to ſuch vulgar ſordid Raillery; and the very beſt of Quality, even Royalty it ſelf, even *ipſa ſua ſacra Caeſarea Majeſtas* may be abus'd by its own Title with an affected and ſneering reherſal of it. Yet this may be born with however, and is therefore pardonable, becauſe it's contemptible: but when Buffoonery grows up to Impiety, and dully profanes the moſt adorable Names,

Holy

Holy Apoſtles, Bleſſed Saviour, Ever bleſſed Trinity, by a fulſom Repetition or a blaſphemous Irony; I muſt own to you I want *Engliſh* words to expreſs my juſt Sentiment. May the Man grow wittier and wiſer, by finding this Stuff will not take nor pleaſe: and, ſince by a little ſmattering in Learning and great Conceitedneſs of himſelf, he has loſt his Religion: may he find it again by harder ſtudy, and a humbler mind. For the miſery of it is, He that goes a Fool into Atheiſm, (as all are that now go) muſt come out of it like a Fool too (if ever he comes) unleſs he acquires ten times the Knowledge, that's neceſſary for a common Chriſtian.

R E-

REMARKS.

I.

QUOD *dedit principium adveniens?* was ſaid of *Thraſo* in the Comedy. And our Author, to give us as good a taſt of his Sufficiency, ſets out with this Sentence in his very Dedication. * *As none* ſays he, *but artificial deſigning Men, or crack-brain'd Enthuſiaſts, preſume to be* Guides *to others in matters of* Speculation; *ſo none, who think they ought to be* guided *in thoſe matters, make* choice *of any but ſuch for their* Guides. Now beſides the falſeneſs of the Propoſitions, here is a ſmall figure in Rhetoric, call'd Nonſence, in the very turn of this Sentence. For if *None* but deſigning and crackbrain'd Men preſume to be Guides to others, thoſe *others*, that make uſe of Guides, muſt needs have Them and no other. Where then is the *Choice*? Or what power is there of *chuſing*, when there's no room for compariſon, or preference? As *none*, ſays he, but Prieſts preſume to be Guides, ſo none make *choice* of any other Guides but Prieſts. As no member of the body preſumes to ſee but the *Eye*, ſo no Man makes *choice* of any other Member to ſee with, but the *Eye*. Is not here now an admirable Period, with exact propriety of word and thought?

But to pardon the falſe connexion of his *As* and his *So*; pray, what are we to underſtand here by *Matters of Speculation*? Why, all Speculation without exception, every branch of *Mathematics*, and all *Science*

* *Pag.* 4.

whatever

whatever: for there is not one word preceding, that reſtrains the ſenſe to *Speculations in Theology*. So that by this Man's reaſoning, we are to ſay thus; No Man muſt take *Euclid* or *Archimedes*, Our *Leibnitz*, or Your *Newton*, or any one elſe dead or living, for his Guide in Speculation. They were *deſigning Men* or elſe *crackbrain'd Enthuſiaſts*, when they preſum'd to write Mathematics, and become Guides to others. As for our Author, though he owns * *all* Arts and Sciences muſt be known, to know any *One* thorowly; that not *one* of them can be omitted, if you pretend to be a judge in *one ſingle* Book, *the Bible*, 'tis ſo very *miſcellaneous*; yet, if you will believe him, he renounces all Guides, and is his own Maſter ſelf-taught. He's a great Aſtronomer without *Tycho* or *Kepler*, and an Architect without *Vitruvius*. He walk'd alone in his Infancy, and was never led in hanging-ſleeves. And yet this mighty Pretender has not broach'd one Doctrine in all his Book, which he has not borrow'd from Others, and which has not been dictated by blind Guides many Ages ago.

But we'l indulge the Man a little more, and ſuppoſe he did not mean *Speculations* at large, but only in matters of Religion. And then the Sentence will run thus; *That none elſe preſume to be Guides to others in ſpeculative Points of Religion, but either artificial deſigning Men, or crackbrain'd Enthuſiaſts.* Now the Man is in his true colours; and though he blunder'd in the Expreſſion, this was the Thought he endeavor'd at. And by this we muſt infer, that *Eraſmus*, *Grotius*, *Bochart*, and other great Men, that have wrote Commentaries on the Bible, and *preſum'd to be Guides to others*, were either *crackbrain'd Fools* or *deſigning Knaves*. Nay this Author's beloved *Monſieur le Clerc* muſt come in too for the hard choice

* *Pag.* 9. 10, 11.

of

of one of theſe Epithets. And yet, what is ſtrange, theſe very Men with more of your own Nation, the *Chillingworths*, the *Spencers*, the *Cudworths*, the *Tillotſons*, are honour'd in other parts of his Book and recommended as *Free-thinkers*. What Inconſiſtence is this, what Contradiction? No matter for that: That's a neceſſary ingredient in his Scheme and his Writings: *Huic aliter non ſit, Avite, liber.* What he here preſcribes to others, we muſt take for his own Method: He defies all Guides and Interpreters: He diſclaims all aſſiſtance; he'l decide upon all points *freely* and ſupinely by himſelf, without Furniture, without proper Materials. And, to ſpeak *freely*, one would gueſs by his crude Performance, that he's as good as his word.

II.

In the cloſe of his Dedication he ſays thus: * *It is therefore without the leaſt hopes of doing any good, but purely to comply with your requeſt, that I ſend you this apology for Free-thinking.* If I am not miſtaken, as I may be about a foreign Language, That expreſſion of *Doing any good* is capable of two ſenſes: either of which I ſhall eaſily concede to the Author. If he means, *he had not the leaſt hopes of doing any good*, that is, of doing any good Service, real Benefit, true Advantage to any one by his Book; I am afraid, that ſenſe was true in his *Intention*. Or, if he diſpair'd of *doing any good*, that is, of having any Effect and Succeſs in making Converts by his Book; I queſtion not, but That too will be true in the *Event*.

But though here in the *Epiſtle* he quite deſpairs, *without the leaſt hopes of doing good*; yet in the *Epi-*

* *Pag.* 4.

logue he's a little more ſanguin. For there he ſpeaks of an *Endeavour to do good*, which very Endeavour has no place without ſome degree of Hope. He adviſes there his Patron, to conceal the Name of his *Eſquireſhip*, if he commits the Book to the Preſs. * *For*, ſays he, *I think it Virtue enough to* endeavour to do good, *only within the bounds of doing your ſelf no harm.* Now this is true Atheiſtical *Moral*: do good no further, than you are ſure not to loſe by it; keep your dear Perſon and Intereſt out of *harm's* way. But the Chriſtian Inſtitution ſuppli'd him once with nobler Sentiments: in the practiſe of which the Holy *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs* voluntarily laid down their Lives; a very odd ſort of *Prieſtcraft*. Nay the Heathen Philoſophy would have taught him more elevated Thoughts; if he had not choſen for his *Guide* (however he rails at all *Guides*) the worſt Sect of all.

III.

† *By Free-thinking*, ſays he, *I mean, The uſe of the Underſtanding, in endeavouring to find out the meaning of any Propoſition whatſoever, in conſidering the nature of the Evidence for or againſt it, and in judging of it according to the ſeeming force or weakneſs of the Evidence.* Now we'l allow him, what he deſires, that his Definition is *extenſive* enough; for it comprehends the whole herd of Human Race, even Fools, Madmen, and Children; for they uſe what *Underſtanding* they have; and judge as things *ſeem*; he has *extended* it ſo artfully and with Logical Juſtneſs, that in a Definition of FREE Thinking there is not a Syllable about *Freedom*. 'Tis really no more, than *Think and Judge as you find*; which every Inhabitant

* *Pag.* 178. † *Pag.* 5.

of

of *Bedlam* practiſes every day, as much as any of our illuſtrious Sect.

But perhaps, I am miſtaken; and the Notion of *Freedom* ſuperadded to *thinking* may be implied in thoſe two Pronouns, *Any whatſoever*. And then indeed the ſoberer part of Mankind, who judge for themſelves no further than their Education has fitted them, are wholy excluded; and the *Crack-brain'd* and *Bedlamites* are taken in. *Oliver*'s Porter, as I have been told, would determin daily *de omni ſcibili*; and if he had now been alive, might have had the firſt Chair in this Club. For a modern *Free-thinker* is an Univerſaliſt in Speculation; *any* Propoſition *whatſoever* he's ready to decide; *every day* * *de quolibet ente*, as our Author here *profeſſes*; Self Aſſurance ſupplies all want of Abilities; he'l interpret (as you'l ſee preſently) the *Prophets and Solomon* without *Hebrew*, *Plutarch and Zoſimus* without *Greek*, and *Cicero and Lucan* without *Latin*.

The Characteriſtic of this Sect does not lie at all in the Definition of *Thinking*, but in ſtating the true meaning of their adjective FREE. Which in fact will be found to carry much the ſame Notion, as *Bold*, *Raſh*, *Arrogant*, *Preſumptious*, together with a ſtrong Propenſion to the *Paradox* and the *Perverſe*. For *Free* with them has no relation at all to outward Impediment or Inhibition (which they neither do nor can complain of, not with you in *England* I am ſure) but means an inward Promptneſs and Forwardneſs to decide about Matters beyond the reach of their Studies, in *oppoſition* to the reſt of Mankind. There is nothing plainer through his whole Book, than that He himſelf makes Singularity, Whim, and Contradiction to be the ſpecific Difference, and an Eſſential part in the Compoſition of a

* *Pag.* 5.

Free-thinker. If *Origen*, *Eraſmus*, *Grotius*, &c. chance to have any *Noſtrum* againſt the Current of common Doctrine, they are preſently of his Party, and he dubbs them *Free-thinkers*: in all the reſt of their Writings where they fall in with the common Opinions, they are diſcharg'd by him with Ignominy; even proſcrib'd as *Unthinkers*, *Half-thinkers*, and *Enemies to Free-thinking*. Why this unequal Uſage, unleſs he thinks *Freedom of Thoughts* to be then only exercis'd, when it diſſents and oppoſes? Has not the World for ſo many Ages thought and judg'd *freely* on *Euclid*, and yet has aſſented to all his Propoſitions? Is it not poſſible, to have us'd the like *freedom*, and yet cloſe in with the Apoſtle's Creed, Our Confeſſion, or Your Articles? Surely I think as *freely*, when I conclude my Soul is Immaterial; as the Author does, when he affirms His to be made of the ſame Materials, with that of a Swine.

Another Idea couch'd in their adjective FREE, is Jealouſy, Miſtruſt, and Surmiſe. 'Tis a firm perſuaſion among them, That there are but two ſorts in Mankind, Deceivers and Deceiv'd, Cheats and Fools. Hence it is, that dreaming and waking they have one perpetual Theme, *Prieſtcraft*. This is juſt like the opinion of *Nero*, * *who believ'd for certain, that every man was guilty of the ſame Impurities that He was; only ſome were craftier than others to diſſemble and conceal it*. And the Surmiſe in both Caſes muſt procede from the ſame Cauſe; either a very corrupt Heart, or a crazy and crackbrain'd Head, or, as it often happens, Both.

* *Suet. Ner.* c. 29. Ex nonnullis comperi, perſuaſiſſimum habuiſſe eum, neminem hominum pudicum, aut ulla corporis parte purum eſſe; verum pleroſque diſſimulare vitium, & calliditate obtegere.

This

IV.

* *This Definition cannot*, he conceives, *be excepted againſt by the Enemies of* Free-Thinking, *as not including the* Crime *with which they charge* Free-Thinkers *in order to render them odious to Unthinking People.* His Definition, as we have ſeen, includes nothing at all in it, beſides *Thinking* and *Judging*; there's nothing in it to deſcribe *Free*, which he left us to ſupply: and as we find in the whole tenour of his Book, That word does really *include* not one *Crime* only, but many. Take the general Definition excluſive of the *Crime*, and compare it with the *Title* of his Book, and the latter will be found either flat Nonſenſe in it ſelf, or a Contradiction to the whole. *This Diſcourſe*, ſays the Title, *was occaſion'd by the* Riſe *and* Growth *of a Sect call'd Free-thinkers.* Why then it had the ſtaleſt occaſion that ever poor Diſcourſe had: for the *Riſe* of that *Sect* (if the general Definition conſtitutes it) is as early as the Creation of *Adam*; or (in His Scheme, who hints his willingneſs to believe † *Men before Adam*) even much earlier than that. Nay, if we may gueſs at his Creed from his Poet *Manilius*, * the Sect muſt have *riſen* without any *Riſe*, and have its *growth* from all *Eternity*. For when ever the Species of Man exiſted, 'tis moſt certain, there muſt have been *Free-thinkers*, as far as this *Definition* goes. They began at once with the *Free-Breathers*, the *Free-Hearers*, and the *Free-Smellers*; and are every whit as numerous and populous, as thoſe are.

Again, pray conſider the words, a SECT of *Free-thinkers*; that is, a Rope of Sand; a Sum of Cy-

* *Pag.* 5. † *Pag.* 160. * *Pag.* 151.

phers;

phers; a Commonwealth of Savages, where no body governs nor no body obeys,

Νομάδες, ἀκοὴ δ' ἐδὲν ἐδεὶς ἐδενός.

SECT, *Secta* or *Diſciplina*, is a Company of Perſons agreeing in the ſame Syſtem of Opinions and Doctrines; the words have their derivation *a ſectando & diſcendo, from following and learning*; as the *Platonic* Sect follow'd the Doctrine of *Plato*, the *Peripatetic* of *Ariſtotle*. Now a modern *Free-thinker*, that profeſſes he will neither *follow* nor *learn*, that renounces all *Guides* and *Teachers*, as either *Crackbrain'd* or *Cheats*; how can this unſociable Animal be ever of a *Sect*? 'tis a contradiction in Terms, and a thorow piece of Nonſenſe.

But ſurely the Author had ſome meaning, when he gave that Title to his Book. No doubt of it, and the Book it ſelf explains it. For under all this pretenſe to *Free-thinking*, He and his Friends have a Set of Principles and *Dogmata*, to which He that will not *Aſſent and Conſent* (I cannot ſay *Oath and Subſcription* are requir'd) ſhall be excluded the Sect. That the Soul is material and mortal, Chriſtianity an impoſture, the Scriptures a forgery, the Worſhip of God ſuperſtition, Hell a fable, and Heaven a dream, our Life without providence, and our Death without hope like that of Aſſes and Dogs, are parts of the Glorious Goſpel of theſe truly * *Idiot Evangeliſts*. If all your *Free-thinking* does not centre in theſe Opinions, you ſhall be none of their Family. Clame your Right as long as you will upon the terms of the *Definition*; plead, that you have *thought freely*, impartially, and carefully upon all thoſe Propoſitions, and that in all of them *the force of Evidence* has drawn you to the contrary ſide; proteſt againſt this foul play, that while they clamour a-

* *Pag.* 90.

bout

bout *Free-thinking*, they themſelves impoſe Creeds and terms of Communion; that the Author, while he rails at all *Guides*, obtrudes himſelf as a *Guide* to others; all this ſhall avail you nothing, you ſhall never be incorporated into the *riſing and growing Sect*, till you own that That's the only *Free-thinking*, to *Think* juſt as They do.

V.

He now proceeds by Five Arguments to prove every Man's Right to *Free-thinking*, according to that *Definition:* a very needleſs and uſeleſs labour: for no Religion, nor Sect, not the very Papiſts, deny it. 'Tis as neceſſary to the Rational Mind, as Reſpiration is to the Vital Body. Without this all Religions that were, are, or may be, are equally commendable. Chriſtianity it ſelf depended on it at it's firſt propagation: the Reformation was grounded upon it, and is maintain'd and ſupported upon the ſame bottom. We ſhall leave therefore his Five Arguments to prove what none deny; only make ſome *Remarks* upon his Ignorance and Unfairneſs in ſeveral Incidents, that he has ſlid in by the By.

* He runs a parallel between *Free-thinking* and *Free-painting*; which latter he laments is not more cultivated *in Great-Britain*; and can never be brought to *perfection* there, unleſs *ſuitable Encouragements* be given to *Free-painters*, ſo as *numbers of Men and many Hands* may be employ'd and encourag'd. Now here is a pretty broad and palpable inſinuation, that by changing the terms of the Parallel is to hint to the Public, that *a ſuitable encouragement ſhould be given to Free-thinkers*; ſo that more Hands and Heads may be invited to ſo meritorious a Work. I could

* *Pag.* 7.

ſcarce

ſcarce have beleiv'd, he would have ſhown himſelf ſo ſoon. What, already offering at Stipends and Salaries and Benefices for his Sect? He more than once in his Book, grudges the great charge the Public is at, in providing for ſo many *Prieſts*. And what gainer would the Public be, if it turn'd out the *Chriſtian Prieſts*, and with an equal or greater charge maintain'd *Atheiſt Preachers*? For really that would be the Caſe, and the Man has reaſon to put in for Salaries betimes. For whenever Atheiſm ſhould be general and eſtabliſh'd, then even *Chriſtianity* would become *Free-thinking*. And, if proviſion was not ſettled for Parochial Lectures every week, the People would be apt to relapſe again from the new National Church. So that all that the Public would ſave by the bargain, is to change the Perſons not the Expenſe; and inſtead of the preſent poſſeſſors of the Pulpit, to have an equal number of *Reverend* and *Right Reverend* and *Moſt Reverend* Preachers of Atheiſm.

VI.

He affirms, That * *Time, Labour and Numbers of hands* are neceſſary to bring *Thinking* in any Science whatever to tolerable perfection: the firſt Notions will be rude and imperfect; Time and Maturity are requir'd towards any degree of Juſtneſs. Now ſince the Sect of *Free-thinkers* by his own account is but now *riſing and growing*, and the *Æra* of it is plac'd no earlier, than Your late *Revolution*: you may take his own argument and word for it, That the *Thoughts* in this Diſcourſe of his for want of due Maturation are all crude and undigeſted. And really without his Indication, αὐτὸ δείξει, the Thing it ſelf will ſpeak ſo, before I've done with

* *Pag.* 7, 8.

his

his Book. But however, in the next Generation, when more Progreſs is made in *Thinking*, and more Numbers are come in; he ſeems to promiſe, they will write better.

**All Sciences and Arts*, ſays he, *have a mutual Relation, Harmony, Dependency, and Connexion; and the juſt Knowledge of any One cannot be acquir'd without the Knowledge of all the Reſt.* Weigh now this man's Abilities in his own Scale. He declares he judges *every day de quolibet ente*; and yet to every ſingle *Quodlibet*, he acknowledges as neceſſary the whole Circle of Sciences. A very *Hudibras* in perfection; no Nut is too hard for his Teeth:

Nil intra eſt olea, nihil extra eſt in nuce duri.

And yet this *Great Promiſer* with all the aſſiſtance of his Club perpetually bewrays a profound ignorance in all Science, in all Antiquity, and in the very Languages it is convey'd in.

VII.

Homer's ILIAD he admires, † *as the Epitome of all Arts and Sciences.* And by This now, one would gueſs, he had read it in the Original. Be it ſo: and when he hears, there's an *Odyſſeïs* of *Homer*, he will read and admire that too. Well, where are the footſteps of this vaſt Knowledge in *Homer*? Why *for inſtance*, ſays he, *he could never have deſcrib'd, in the manner he has done*, a Chariot or a Chariot-wheel *without the particular knowledge of a* Coach-maker: *ſuch knowledge being abſolutely neceſſary to that deſcription.* Here's your juſtneſs of Thought. What, nothing leſs than a Coach-*Maker*'s knowledge? Would not a Coach-*Man*'s have ſerv'd the turn? At this rate our Friend *Homer* (as poor and blind as ſome

* *Pag.* 8, 9. † *Pag.* 9.

have thought him) was the ableſt *Jack of all Trades*, that ever was in nature. *Hippias* the *Elean*, who preach'd and blazon'd his Arts at the Olympic Games, That all his Habit from head to foot and every Utenſil for his houſe was made with his own hands, was an *Idiot Evangeliſt* to him. For by the ſame rule, when *Homer* deſcribes a Ship under ſail; he had the *particular Knowledge* both of a *Ship-Carpenter* and a *Pilot*: when he deſcribes the *well-booted Greeks* and ſeveral ſorts of *Shields* and *Sandals*, he had the *particular knowledge* of *Tychius*, σκυτοτόμων ὄχ' ἄριστος, *the very Prince of all Shoomakers*. And yet I am apt to fancy, if our Author had no better an Artiſt than the old Poet for his Shoos, he would be as ſorry a *Free-walker*, as he is now a *Free-thinker*.

To prove *Homer*'s univerſal Knowledge *a priori*, our Author ſays, * *He deſign'd his Poem for Eternity, to pleaſe and inſtruct Mankind.* Admirable again. *Eternity* and *Mankind*, nothing leſs than all Ages and all Nations, were in the Poet's foreſight. Though our Author vouches that he *thinks every day de quolibet ente*; give me leave to except *Homer*: for he never ſeems to have thought of Him or his Hiſtory. Take my word for it, poor *Homer* in thoſe Circumſtances and early times had never ſuch aſpiring thoughts. He wrote a ſequel of Songs and Rhapſodies, to be ſung by himſelf for ſmall earnings and good cheer, at Feſtivals and other days of Merriment; the *Ilias* he made for the Men, and the *Odyſſeïs* for the other Sex. Theſe looſe Songs were not collected together in the form of an Epic Poem, till *Piſiſtratus*'s time about 500 years after. Nor is there one word in *Homer*, that preſages or promiſes Immortality to his work; as we find there is in the later Poets, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Ovid*, *Lucan*, and *Statius*. He no more thought

* *Pag.* 9.

at

at that time, that his *Poems* would be *immortal*, than our *Free-thinkers* now believe their *Souls* will; and the proof of each will be only *a parte poſt*; in the Event, but not in the Expectation.

VIII.

* *The* BIBLE, ſays he, *is the moſt miſcellaneous Book in the world, and treats of the greateſt Variety of things*; *Creation*, *Deluge*, *Chronology*, *Civil Laws*, *Eccleſiaſtical Inſtitutions*, *Nature*, *Miracles*, *Buildings*, *Husbandry*, *Sailing*, *Phyſics*, *Pharmacy*, *Mathematics*, *Metaphyſics*, and *Morals*. Agreed; and what is his Inference from this? Why *Free-thinking* is therefore neceſſary: *for to underſtand the matter of this Book, and to be Maſter of the whole, a man muſt be able to think juſtly in every Science and Art.* Very true! and yet All he has here ſaid of his Sciences is requiſite, were Your *Engliſh* Bible ſuppos'd to be the very Original. Add therefore to all the Requiſites here enumerated, a ſufficient Skill in the *Hebrew* and *Greek Languages*. Now paſs your verdict on the man from his own evidence and confeſſion. *To underſtand the Bible*, ſays he, *requires all Sciences*; and two *Languages* beſides, ſay I. But it's plain from his Book, that he has already condemn'd the whole Bible for a Forgery and Impoſture. Did he do it without *underſtanding the matter* of it? That's too ſcandalous for him to own. We muſt take it then, that he profeſſes himſelf accompliſh'd in all *Sciences and Arts* according to his own rule.

Quid tulit hic tanto dignum promiſſor hiatu? Where has He or any of his Sect ſhown any tolerable Skill in *Science*? What Dark paſſages of *Scripture* have they clear'd, or of any Book whatever?

* *Pag.* 10, 11.

Nay to remit to him his *Sciences* and *Arts*, what have they done in the *Languages*, the ſhell and ſurface of *Scripture*? A great *Maſter of the whole Bible* indeed: that can ſcarce ſtep three lines in the eaſieſt Claſſic Author, produc'd by Himſelf, without a notorious blunder.

IX.

**Among the abſurdities that follow from not Thinking Freely*, he mentions that of the *Pagan*, *who* (he ſays) *ſuppos'd* GOD *to be like an Ox or a Cat or a Plant*. Our Author means the *Aegyptians*; and its plain here from the next clauſe, that he puts GOD under the preſent *Idea* and known Attributes of that Name, as Chriſtians now conceive it. A rare judge in Antiquity, and fit to decide about Scripture. The Matter is no more than this. The *Aegyptians*, who chiefly liv'd upon Husbandry, declar'd by Law, that all thoſe Animals, which were uſeful to Agriculture or deſtroyers of Vermin, ſhould be *holy*, *ſacred*, *and inviolable*; ſo that it was Death to kill any one of them † either deſign'dly or by chance. Theſe they conſider'd, as inſtruments of Divine Providence towards the ſupport of human Life: ** and without that View they conſecrated none. So that it was only a Civil and Political Worſhip, in the Legiſlators; and had very little of Sacred even among the Vulgar. This is plain from what †† *Diodorus* ſays, *That they paid the ſame honours to them, when dead, as when alive*. But our Author's Conception here is really

* *Pag.* 13.

† *Herodotus* in *Euterpe*.

** *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* I. Aegyptii nullam beluam, niſi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex ea caperent, conſecraverunt.

†† *Diod.* lib. I. Σέβονται ἔνια τῶν ζώων Αἰγύπτιοι, οὐ ζῶντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσαντα.

ſo

ſo *abſurd* and ſo monſtrous, that the ſilieſt Pagan in all *Aegypt* would have been aſham'd of him. For according to his notion and the preſent meaning of the word GOD, they declar'd it Death by Law to *kill* an *immortal* and *omnipotent* Cat: and decreed divine Honours to it, after its *Immortality* and Deity was *dead*. When *Thinking* is by longer time come to ſome perfection in the Sect; they will learn perhaps, that the Objects of worſhip in *Paganiſm* and *Polytheiſm* had not all the Attributes, nay generally not *one* of them, that we now by advances in Science and Thought juſtly aſcribe to God: and they may have the pleaſure of inſulting ſeveral of the Clergy, that have wrong ſtated the notion of Heathen Idolatry. In the mean time I'le recommend to him one Thought, when he's diſpos'd to *think de quolibet ente*; What divine Attributes the *Aegyptians* thought of, when they worſhip'd, as good Authors aſſure us, *Crepitum ventris*.

X.

But the moſt antient Fathers of the Church were as bad as his *Aegyptians*: * *for They*, ſays he, *no leſs abſurdly ſuppos'd* GOD *to be material*. And you are to *ſuppoſe*, he's a Droll here, when he ſays *no leſs abſurdly*; for if I wholly miſtake not the Cabbala of his Sect, He himſelf *ſuppoſes* either GOD to be *material*, or not to be at all. With a few of the Fathers the matter ſtands thus: They believ'd the Attributes of God, his Infinite Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs, in the ſame extent as we do: but his Eſſence (no more than we can now) they could not diſcover. The Scriptures, they ſaw, call'd him *Spiritus*, *Spirit*; and the Human Soul *Anima*,

* *Pag.* 13.

Breath

Breath: both which in their primitive Senſe mean *Aerial Matter*: and all the Words that *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin* of Old, or any Tongue now or hereafter can ſupply, to denote the ſubſtance of *God* or *Soul*, muſt either be thus Metaphorical, or elſe merely Negative, as *Incorporeal*, or *Immaterial*. This, when he is in a mood for *Thinking*, he will find to be neceſſary *à priori*, for want of *Ideas*. What wonder then, if in thoſe early times (for he knows, * *its by gradual progreſs in Thinking that Men arrive at full knowledge*) ſome Fathers believ'd that the Divine ſubſtance was *Matter*, or *Body*: eſpecially while the very notion of *Body* was undefined and unfixt, and was as extenſive as *Thing*? Was this ſuch a ſhame in a few Fathers; while the *Stoics*, not a *riſing and growing*, but a *flouriſhing* Sect at that time, maintain'd *Qualities* and *Paſſions*, *Virtues* and *Vices*, *Arts* and *Sciences*, nay *Syllogiſms* and *Soloeciſms* to be *Bodies*? But the real Shame is, that in theſe brighter days of Knowledge, when *Matter* and *Motion* have been thorowly conſider'd, and all the Powers of *Mechaniſm* diſcuſs'd and ſtated; our Author and his Sect ſhould ſtill contend both in Diſcourſe and in Print, *That their Souls are Material*. This they do with ſuch Zeal, as if they ſhould be great gainers by the Victory. And by my conſent, let's cloſe with them upon the debate. Let them put a previous Queſtion, Whether there are in Mankind different Species of Souls? Let this once paſs in the Affirmative; and Their Souls ſhall be allow'd as Corporeal and Brutal, as their Opinions, Writings, and Lives ſeem to repreſent them.

* *Pag.* 8.

XI.

XI.

His next Effort is a retail of ſome Popiſh Doctrines and Rites, * *Infalliblity, Image-Worſhip, and Relicks*, which Our Church and Yours have long ago rejected. What's this then to the purpoſe, or what plea to the preſent *Free-thinkers* in *England*? Nay he owns, we are now rid of theſe Abſurdities, and by whoſe labour and coſt. They obtain'd, ſays he, almoſt univerſally, † *till the Thinking of a few, ſome whereof ſacrificed their Lives by ſo doing, gave a new Turn to the Chriſtian World.* This is manifeſtly meant of the firſt Reformers, and particularly thoſe of *England*, who for freedom of Thinking laid down their Lives.

Atque animas pulchra pro libertate dederunt.

'Twas by the price and purchaſe of Their Blood, that this Author and his Sect have at this day, not only the Liberty, but the Power, Means, and Method of Thinking. For together with Religion, all Arts and Sciences then rais'd up their heads; and both were brought about by the ſame Perſons. And yet this very honeſt and grateful Sect involves thoſe very *Prieſts*, to whom they're indebted for all things, in the Common Crime with thoſe that murder'd them; nay with *Talapoins*, *Bonzes*, *Pawawers*, and who not;

For Prieſts of all Religions are the ſame.

But ſome of the *Fathers* again diſpleaſe him; for they were too ſevere and rigorous for Men of his Genius; they diſallow'd * *Self Defenſe*, *Second Marriages*, and *Uſury*. An Error ſure on the right hand, which ſhews they had not the † *Prieſtcraft* of Pope *Pius* the Fifth. And yet here with his uſual Accu-

* *Pag.* 13. † *Pag.* 14. * *Pag.* 14. † *Pag.* 117.

racy

racy, he lays thoſe things wide and in common, which were preſs'd upon the Clergy only, but in the Laiety conniv'd at. It is a Crime too in the Fathers, that * *Antipodes* were not ſooner demonſtrated, nor the *Earth*'s *Motion about the Sun*. Very well; but pray who were the Perſons, that gave new light in theſe matters? All hearty profeſſors and practiſers of Religion, and among them ſeveral *Prieſts*. All theſe things were diſcover'd and perfected, before this new Club had its *Riſe:* nor is there the leaſt Branch of Science, that any of their Members either invented or improv'd.

XII.

* But now we have him for ten pages together with Image and Allegory; *Free-ſeeing* is ſubſtituted for *Free-thinking*, and a *Confeſſion of Eye-ſight Faith* for a *Chriſtian Creed*; and then in a tedious parallel the ſeveral juggles of *Hocus Pocus* make the Emblem of *Prieſtcraft*. Argument in all this you are to expect none, there's no occaſion for that: for Illuſtration, Similitude, Compariſon, eſpecially when turn'd to Ridicule and diſtorted into Farce, do the buſineſs much better; and (as I have been told) work Wonders for the *growing Sect*, and make Converts to admiration.

SUPPOSE, ſays he, a Set of Men ſhould fancy it was abſolutely neceſſary to the peace of Society, or to ſome other great purpoſe, to hinder and prevent *Free-ſeeing*, and to impoſe a Creed and Confeſſion and Standard of *Eye-ſight Faith*. Theſe Men, ſays he, muſt either be Madmen or deſigning Knaves: and what methods would they take? They would draw Articles in flat contradiction to plain *Sight*;

* *Pag.* 14. † *Pag.* 25. *to* 35.

require

require Subſcription, and forbid Oppoſition to them; explain, paraphraſe, and comment upon them; ſettle Penſions and Salaries for thoſe that preach and propagate them; traduce, puniſh, and perſecute to the utmoſt all that diſagree to them.

Now under this Image you are to underſtand *Chriſtianity*, and all *Religion* whatever: for our Author is playing *Hocus Pocus* in the very Similitude he takes from that Juggler, and would ſlip upon you (as He phraſes it) a *Counter* for a *Groat*. The true meaning of it is this: SUPPOSE, *that Religion was firſt contriv'd, either by the Prieſthood for Lucre, or by the Magiſtrate for eaſy Government*. Why truly, if we SUPPOSE it to be a Sham, we *do* ſuppoſe it a Sham. A wonderful argument, and a mighty advance. Does he detain us in ſo many nauſeating Pages, and all along beg the Queſtion? A moſt formidable man this, for Thought and Demonſtration.

XIII.

Well but he'l ſhew Inſtances of Religious Juggle, in the * *Oracular Temples or Churches of the Pagans*. Pray mind the emphatic Words, *or Churches*, and admire the Author's penetration and diſcretion: For without that prudent explication, *Temples* perhaps in Your Language might have been miſunderſtood, and miſtaken for *Inns of Court*. Theſe Temples, he ſays, were contriv'd with many Caverns and Holes to produce fearful Noiſes, and furniſh'd with Machines for the Prieſts to act their parts in. And pray, who taught him all this? Is it not chiefly, and almoſt ſolely, to be learnt from the *Chriſtian Fathers*? Does not he own, † that the *Chri-*

* *Pag.* 19. † *Pag.* 20. *He had it out of* Lucian's Alexander. Ἔξω Ἐπικούρειοι, ἔξω Χριστιανοί.

ſtians as well as *Epicureans* were chas'd away by thoſe Prieſts, before they would pronounce any Oracles? And yet thorow this whole Book, by a worſe trick than *Hocus Pocus*, the *Chriſtians* are charg'd with the very Frauds, that They either only or chiefly have diſcover'd.

But now a Specimen of his Learning again, which he ſprinkles by the way. * *It was univerſally believ'd*, ſays he, *among ordinary people, That the Gods themſelves came down from Heaven, and eat of the repaſts, which the Prieſts prepar'd for them at the people's Expenſe:* And again in the next Page, *That the Gods came down to eat upon Earth.* Now did I not gueſs right, that for all his fine Panegyric upon the † *Ilias* of *Homer*, he was little or not at all acquainted with that Poem? For if he were, he would have learnt from thence, that in the Heathen Notion the *Gods* could not *eat upon Earth*, nor devour human *Repaſts:*

* Οὐ γὰρ σῖτον ἔδουσ', οὐ πίνουσ' αἴθοπα οἶνον,
Τοὔνεκ' ἀναίμονές εἰσι, καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται.

Whence therefore had our Learned Author this bold aſſertion of *univerſal belief*? Even from *Bel and the Dragon:* and what *his Mother* once taught him there, he aſcribes to Paganiſm in common. The real matter is no more than this. When a Heathen Prieſt ſlew a Victim, he had no more of it for his ſhare than Law and Cuſtom allow'd, ſcarce worth the labour of Butchering: the Entrals and moſt uſeleſs Parts were burnt on the Altar, and the beſt of the Victim was carried home to the Sacrificer's houſe, to be feaſted on by his Family and Friends: and if the Prieſt was invited too as a Gueſt, it was a Work of Supererogation. Nor did the moſt credulous be-

* *Pag.* 19. † *Pag.* 9. * *Iliad.* 5, v. 347.

lieve,

lieve, that Gods came down and devour'd *Fleſh*; nor was any ſuch *Repaſt* ſet apart for Them. If any Victuals was ſo ſet, either in Temples or the open Streets; it was well known, that the Sweepers of the Fanes got the firſt, and the Poor of the Town the latter. All they believ'd in relation to the Gods, beſides the Piety and the Prayers, was only, that the Steam of the burnt Sacrifice aſcended up to Heaven, and delighted or (if you will) fed the Gods. This *Homer* would have told him too, That *Libation* and *Steam* was the only ſhare the Gods had in any Offering:

*Λοιβῆς τε κνισῆς τε, τὸ γὰρ λάχομεν γέρας ἡμεῖς.

Whence *Ariſtophanes* in his Play, call'd *The Birds*, makes a City to be built in the Air, on purpoſe to ſtop all intercourſe between Heaven and Earth, *That no Smoke from Sacrifices ſhould aſcend to the Gods:* and preſently *Prometheus* is introduc'd, bringing the News, *That the Gods were almoſt ſtarv'd, having not had one particle of* Steam, *ſince* Nephelococcygia *was built.* 'Tis true indeed, there was another Notion, * that the Gods often came down from Heaven in Human Shape, to inquire into the Actions of Men, and ſo like Strangers and Pilgrims were unawares entertain'd, and (ſeemingly) eat and drank with their Hoſts. But this is nothing to the *Prieſts*, nor to the aſſertion of the Author: who no doubt will anon be found a moſt ſubtle Interpreter of *Solomon* and the *Prophets*; after he has been ſo miſerably impos'd on by that ſilly and ſpurious Book, *Bel and the Dragon.*

* *Odyſſ.* ρ. v. 485.

XIV.

After a few 'thredbare narratives about the *Armenian*, *Greek*, and *Popiſh* Prieſts, the *miraculous Flame* at *Jeruſalem*, and the melting *Blood* at *Naples*; he has his fling at Us *Lutherans*. * *The Lutheran Prieſts*, ſays he, *contrary to the teſtimony of Men's ſenſes, make their Followers believe, That the Body and Blood of Chriſt are ſuperadded to the Bread and Wine:* which he parallels with an old Story, as lewd as it's vulgar. Now, though I am more concern'd in This *Remark*, than many Others, for the particular honour of Our Church; I deſign not to launch out in a Vindication of our Doctrine, which this Scribler underſtands no more, than he did that of the *Aegyptians*. You know ſomething of the Univerſity of *Leipſic*; we are reputed the greateſt *Latitudinarians* and *Free-thinkers* of our Sect, not near ſo ſtiff and rigid as thoſe of *Wittenberg* or *Jene:* and yet I'l tell this Author, If he had publiſh'd his wretched Libel with Us: without any inſtigation from the Prieſts the Magiſtrate would ſoon have taken care of him, either in a Priſon or a Dark Room. What his reception will be in *England*, I pretend not to gueſs. You have a glorious Liberty there, the Parent of many noble Books, which under a leſs freedom of Thought would never have been wrote. And 'tis that Novelty of Notions that makes the product of the *Engliſh* Preſs ſo inquir'd after here. But I fear, the outragious Licence of this Author and others of his Stamp will in time have an unexpected Effect, and oblige Your Government to abridge All of that good Freedom, which Theſe have ſo much abus'd. And then we Foreigners of Curio-

* *Pag.* 25.

ſity,

ſity, when we ſhall ſee nothing come from *Britain* but ſtanch and ſtaple Poſtils, muſt curſe the impious memory of this Writer and his whole Tribe.

XV

Tantamne rem tam neglegenter? The Queſtion he propoſes to conſider is no leſs than this, * *Whether the Chriſtian Religion is founded on Divine Revelation?* This he reſolves to examin and determin *by himſelf*. And we may eaſily foreſee what the Sentence will be, under ſo ignorant and corrupt a Judge. Nay his Book ſufficiently ſhews, he has given his Verdict already; and reſolv'd, that Darkneſs is brighter and more deſirable than Light. Let us beſtow ſome reflexions on his Conduct: for, for all his noiſe about Speculation *in general*, This Queſtion is the whole affair and buſineſs, the whole Compaſs and Sphere of modern FREE-THINKING.

What in common Life would denote a man Raſh, Fool-hardy, Hair-brain'd, Opiniatre, Craz'd, is recommended in This Scheme as the true method in Speculation. Are you dangerouſly ſick? you will call an able Phyſician. Is your Eſtate threaten'd and attackt? you'l conſult the beſt Lawyer. But have you an affair upon your hands, wherein your very Soul and Being and all Eternity lye at ſtake? (—*Neque enim ludicra petuntur præmia*) Why there you are to ſeek no help, but confide in your own abilities. That is, If you have a very deep and broad River to paſs; ſcorn to ask for Cork or Bladders; flounce in, and hazard all, though you have never learnt to Swim.

This rational Author (*p.* 107.,) puts the ſame Objection to himſelf: and he notably anſwers it thus:

* *Pag.* 26.

A man, ſays he, *of no Profeſſion may have as much Law, Phyſic, and Divinity, as any Serjeant or Doctor of them all:* and then, with a Quaker's ſtory out of his Friend Mr. *Le Clerc*, he declares That to be *a happy Country*, *a very Paradiſe*, where none of thoſe Three *Profeſſions* is admitted. And who doubts, but in this reply, there's as much Senſe as good Manners?

But for all this Author's great Skill in *Phyſic* and *Law*; he'l hardly make himſelf Sick on purpoſe, or bring on a Trial againſt his own Eſtate, to ſhew his great Abilities. Why then will he needleſly and voluntarily run a risk for his Soul and Salvation? and fool-hardily put his head under a Weight, that may cruſh him to Death? The ſtrange difference in this Conduct, when examin'd to the bottom, will open the whole Myſtery of *Free-thinking* and *Atheiſm*.

'Tis plain, a Man that is born in a Chriſtian Country, if he is a Juſt and Good Man, has no intereſt to wiſh That Religion falſe. The Moral Precepts fall in with his own opinion and choice: no reſtraints are laid upon him, but what out of paternal affection he would forbid his own Son. No foreign Religion, much leſs the Atheiſtic Scheme, threaten him with any Danger; ſhould he be here in an Error. He's as ſafe, as thoſe that differ from him, were he really in the wrong. But then if it be true; what glorious Promiſes and Rewards, not ſuperiour only to other Schemes, but beyond all Human Wiſhes? The ſpeculative Doctrines in it (which affect the main chance) are very few and eaſy. If his Education has enabl'd him for't, he'l examin Them and the whole grounds of Faith, and find them true to his ſatisfaction and comfort. If he's engag'd in active and buſy Life; he'l acquieſce in the Judg-

Judgments of thoſe, who have better means and leaſure to know them.

Thus it is, will be, and muſt be; while Men lead ſuch virtuous Lives, as entitle them to the *Promiſes* of Religion. And were there not equal *Threats* in it on the other hand, were it all Heaven without any Hell, there would not be one Atheiſt (unleſs *Crackbrain'd*) in Chriſtendom. I poſitively affirm, that no man in his ſenſes, educated in our Holy Religion, ever did or could fall from it to Atheiſm; till by conſidering his own Actions and Deſigns, he deſpair'd of the Promiſes of Chriſtianity, and look'd upon it with Fear and Terror.

In that caſe indeed, and in that alone, out of uneaſineſs of Mind they wiſh all Religion was falſe: and that's the Original of modern *Free-thinking*. Then they ranſack all impious Books for Objections againſt it; they're byaſs'd in their favor; a ſingle Ounce in that Scale buoys up a hundred in the other. *Pagans*, *Mahometans*, *Pawawers*, and *Talapoins*, are all good Vouchers againſt Chriſtianity. All that's ſaid by *Chriſtians* (and who elſe muſt ſpeak for them) is ſuſpected for Craft and Deſign. And the very Ignorance of theſe *Free-thinkers* does them more Service than Knowledge. For who can deal with an *Ignoramus*, that is warpt by his Inclination, fixt there by his Conceitedneſs, jealous of all contrary Inſtruction, and uncapable of ſeeing the Force of it?

That this is the very Caſe of our Author, and thoſe of his Club, is pretty notorious. Inquire cloſely into their Lives, and there you will find the true Reaſon, why they clamour againſt Religion. For when they have ſettled themſelves in Atheiſm; they are then elevated with *Joy* and *Mirth*, as if they had obtain'd a great Conqueſt. Now this is wholy unnatural, unleſs Religion is view'd by them as the greateſt

greateſt of Terrors. What? rejoice that we have loſt Immortality, and muſt dye like the Beaſts? Utterly impoſſible! All the Springs of Human Paſſions reſiſt and refute it. Miſery at that rate may excite Laughter, and Proſperity Tears: Indignation may raiſe Love, and Complacency Revenge. But if once Heaven is deſponded of, and Hell opens its horrible Mouth; then indeed *Mountains are deſired to cover us*; and the thoughts of Deſtruction or Annihilation may really produce *Joy*.

This, I ſay again, is the true Origin of *Free-thinking*, and not the Force of any Objections againſt the Truth of Chriſtianity: and as a proof, I appeal to This very Book. For no doubt the Writer has couch'd in it the ſtrongeſt Objections he was maſter of. And yet Thoſe are ſo old and ſtale, that if They could have any operation, Chriſtianity would have been extinct above a Thouſand Years ago. Well! but they had influence upon Him, and would have ſo upon others, if Fear and Force were remov'd, and Men left at free Liberty. So far from that; ſo far is our Author from ſeeing deeper into thoſe Objections than others before him; that (as I'l preſently prove) he underſtands not the mere Grammatical ſenſe, much leſs the application and import, of any old Paſſage he cites.

XVI.

* It's the great Benefit, ſays he, of *Free-thinking*, that the ſuppos'd Power of the Devil in *Poſſeſſions* and *Witchcrafts* has viſibly declin'd in *England*, ſince a Liberty to think freely has been given and taken there. A quaint conceit indeed, and very far fetch'd. So that You in *Great Britain* ow it to this *riſing Sect*,

* *Pag.* 29.

that

that you have not ſo many Proſecutions of *Witches* as formerly. This is *Thraſo* again exactly:

Labore alieno magno partam gloriam
Verbis in ſeſe tranſmovet, qui habet ſalem.

I do not think, any *Engliſh* Prieſt will or need affirm in general, That there are now no real Inſtances of Sorcery or Witchcraft; eſpecially while you have public Law (which They neither enacted nor procur'd,) declaring thoſe practices to be Felony. But I muſt needs ſay, that while I ſojourn'd among you, I obſerv'd fewer of the Clergy give in to particular Stories of that kind, than of the Commonalty or Gentry. In the dark times before the Reformation, not becauſe they were Popiſh, but becauſe Unlearn'd, any extraordinary Diſeaſe attended with odd Symptoms, ſtrange Ravings or Convulſions, abſurd Eating or Egeſtion, was out of ignorance of *Natural* Powers aſcrib'd to *Diabolical*. This Superſtition was univerſal, from the Cottages to the very Courts; nor was it ingrafted by Prieſtcraft, but is implanted in Human Nature: no Nation is exempted from it; not our Author's *Paradiſe* of *New Jerſey*, where no *Prieſts* have yet footing: and if the next Ages become unlearn'd, That Superſtition will, I will not ſay return, but ſpring up anew. What then has leſſen'd in *England* your ſtories of Sorceries? Not the *growing Sect*, but the Growth of Philoſophy and Medicine. No thanks to Atheiſts, but to the Royal Society and College of Phyſicians; to the *Boyle*'s and *Newton*'s, the *Sydenham*'s and *Ratcliff*'s. When the People ſaw the Diſeaſes, they had imputed to Witchcraft, quite cur'd by a courſe of Phyſic; they too were cur'd of their former Error: they learn'd

Truth by the *Event*, not by a falſe poſition *a priori*: That there was neither Witch, Devil, nor God. And then as to the Frauds and Impoſtures in this way; they have moſt of them been detected by the *Clergy*; whom our Writer here wickedly libels as Complices and Parties in them. The two ſtrongeſt Books I have read on this Subject were both written by *Prieſts*; the one by Dr. *Becker* in *Holland*, and the other by a Dr. of your own, whoſe name I've forgot, that was afterwards Archbiſhop of *York*.

XVII.

We are now come to his II. Section, where he brings ſeveral Arguments to prove the Duty and Neceſſity of *Free-thinking* upon *Religious Queſtions*. Now take *Free-thinking* in that Open ſenſe that Himſelf takes it in, when he aſcribes it to *Chillingworth*, *Taylor*, and *Tillotſon*; and you may grant all his Arguments, and yet quite diſappoint him. But if you take it in that Interior meaning, that the Members of his Club do, as a modiſh and decent word for *Atheiſm*; then all his Arguments are mere Trumpery; and his Conſequences from them are as ſhort, as his occaſional Learning in them is ſhallow.

One of his Capital Arguments is from the *Evil of* * SUPERSTITION, which *terrible Evil* and *great Vice* can never be avoided, but by turning *Free-thinker*, that is (in plainer *Engliſh*) abandoning all Religion. Strange! That *Superſtition* and *Religion*, which have been diſtinguiſh'd and divided this two thouſand Years, ſhould yet ſtick ſo faſt together, that our Author cannot ſeparate them: ſo that to eaſe himſelf of the One, he muſt abdicate Both. His diſmal *Deſcription* of it is in the words of *Cicero*; which

* *Pag.* 33.

chiefly

chiefly relate to little Bigotries in Civil Life, not to fabulous Conceptions about the Supreme Being. And his Inference from thence is exactly, as if I ſhould now ſay to You: *Sir*, you muſt renounce your Baptiſm and Faith, or elſe you can never be rid of thoſe *terrible Superſtitions* about the *Death-watch*, *Thirteen at one Table*, *Spilling of Salt*, and *Childermaſ-day*.

XVIII.

But you'l know the Man better, his great Reading and Penetration, when you ſee how he manages and tranſlates that Paſſage of *Cicero*: I'le give you it here, both in the Original, and our Author's Verſion.

* Inſtat enim (Superſtitio) & urget, & quo te cumque verteris, perſequitur: ſive tu vatem, ſive tu omen audieris; ſive immolaris, ſive avem aſpexeris; ſi Chaldaeum, ſi Haruſpicem videris; ſi fulſerit, ſi tonuerit; ſi tactum aliquid erit de caelo, ſi oſtenti ſimile natum factumve quippiam: quorum neceſſe eſt plerumque aliquid eveniat: ut numquam liceat quieta mente conſiſtere. Perfugium videtur omnium laborum & ſollicitudinum eſſe ſomnus: at ex eo ipſo plurimae curae metuſque naſcuntur. *Cic. de Div. II.* 72,

If you give way to Superſtition, it will ever haunt and plague you. If you go to a Prophet, or regard Omens; if you Sacrifice, or obſerve the Flight of Birds; if you conſult an Aſtrologer or Haruſpex: if it thunders or lightens, or any place is conſum'd with Lightening, or ſuch like Prodigy happens (as it is neceſſary ſome ſuch often ſhould) all the Tranquillity of the Mind is deſtroy'd. And Sleep it ſelf, which ſeems to be an Aſylum and Refuge from all Trou-

* *Pag.* 35.

ble and Uneaſineſs, does by the aid of Superſtition increaſe your Troubles and Fears.

Now if it ſhall appear; that our Author has miſconſtru'd almoſt every Part and *Comma* of this Paſſage; that he has made the Firſt parts contradict the Laſt, and ſo has put his own Nonſenſe upon the great Original; that he has weakned his own deſign, and made the Place ſpeak with leſs ſtrength againſt Superſtition, than it really does; what apprehenſions are we to have of ſo formidable a Writer?

The whole Tour of the Paſſage is this: A man given to Superſtition can have no ſecurity, day or night, waking or ſleeping: for Occaſions of it will *force* themſelves upon him, *againſt his will*; do what he can to prevent them: and ſo all the Particulars here ſpecifi'd are *involuntary* and *unſought*.

Sive tu vatem, ſive tu omen audieris: If you GO *to a Prophet*, ſays our Tranſlator, *or* REGARD *Omens*. Pray, where's the *Latin* to anſwer *Go* and *Regard*? or where is common ſenſe, thus plainly to beg the Queſtion? For if one *goes* upon ſuperſtitious Errands, no doubt he's troubl'd with Superſtition. The true ſenſe is this: *If you hear a Lunatic or Frantic in the ſtreets foretelling ſome miſchiefs; if a Word is ſpoken accidentally in your hearing, which may be interpreted Ominous.* The *Vates* or *Divini* were Mad-fellows bawling in the Streets and Rodes; and their Predictions might be contemn'd, but muſt neceſſarily be heard, if you came that way.

Sive immolaris, ſive avem aſpexeris: A Man was obliged often to *Sacrifice*, even by his Office; and Birds muſt needs be *ſeen*, if one ſtept but out of *Rome*. Theſe occurrences therefore were *unavoidable*; and ſo *Cicero* meant them. *Si Chaldaeum, ſi Haruſpicem videris; If you* SEE *them*, and That could not be prevented, all public Places being haunted with

with them. But what does our Tranſlator make of theſe? *If you ſacrifice*, ſays he, *or* OBSERVE *the flight of Birds; if you* CONSULT *an Aſtrologer or Haruſpex.* Pure Nonſenſe again: and point blank againſt *Cicero's* meaning: One makes that done by *Deſign*, what the other makes by *Accident*. If by *accident*; then its true, that Superſtition (*inſtat & urget*) *haunts and plagues* one, and there's no eſcaping it: but if by *deſign*; 'tis labouring in a *Fairy* Circle, 'tis begging and ſuppoſing the thing in debate.

To paſs in ſilence his falſe Verſion of *De caelo tactum, Conſum'd with Lightening*, inſtead of *Blaſted*; the next inſtance of his Dulneſs ſurpaſſes all belief. *Si oſtenti ſimile natum factumve quippiam*: that is, *if any Monſter is born, or ſomething like a Prodigy happens*; as Raining of Blood or Wheat or the like. You ſee *Cicero* ſays *oſtenti Simile*, LIKE *a Prodigy*: for his Part in that Diſcourſe was to deny there were *true* Prodigies. A Monſter with two Heads was no Prodigy, but was occaſion'd by Natural Cauſes: the Blood or Wheat, was either a miſtake, or was carried up by a Whirlwind. But behold now, how our Tranſlator has manag'd it: *If any* SUCH-LIKE *Prodigy happens.* This verſion, I am ſure, is a greater Prodigy, than any of them all. What, *Oſtenti ſimile, a ſuch-like Prodigy*? 'Tis manifeſt by his Conſtruction, he join'd them in the ſame Caſe, as Adjective and Subſtantive. Stupidity incredible! I'le leave every man to his own Aſtoniſhment, and ſay no more of the matter. I'le only ask him, not where his *Grammar*, but where his *Brains* were; when by owning and confeſſing *Such-like Prodigies*, he fruſtrated both *Cicero*'s and his own Argument?

To go on once more; *Quorum neceſſe eſt plerumque aliquid eveniat*; that is, *Of which things* (all that were enumerated before) *ſome or other* MUST *frequently happen.* Obſerve that MUST, *neceſſe eſt*, muſt happen of *neceſſity.* And now you ſee, what I ſaid before, that our Tranſlator has made the Firſt parts of the Paſſage contradict the Laſt. And if he'd had the leaſt grain of Sagacity; this laſt *Comma* might have guided him to the true meaning of the former; that the Inſtances muſt all be *accidental*, and not *voluntary* and with deſign. Take the ſeveral Inſtances reckon'd up; and 'tis hardly poſſible to paſs one day in common Life, but ſome objects of Superſtition will *neceſſarily* preſent themſelves: but is it *neceſſary* to *go* to Prophets, to *regard* Omens, to *obſerve* Birds, to *conſult* Aſtrologers? Surely theſe four Verbs have the ſignification of *Choice*, not of *Neceſſity.* And now, Gentlemen of the *Engliſh* Clergy, what think you of your *Free-thinker*? Did I not promiſe for him; that he would manage his old Paſſages with great Ability and Dexterity?

Dixin' ego in hoc eſſe vobis Atticam elegantiam?

XIX.

He's ſo pleas'd with this Subject of *Superſtition*, that he holds us in it ſtill with two moſt Common Citations: for what can there be that is not ſo, in *Horace* and *Virgil*? *Horace*, it ſeems, deſpiſes *Dreams*, *Witches*, *Spectres*, and *Prodigies*; and *Virgil* goes ſomething further. And what then? Both theſe were bred young in the *Epicurean* School, and ſo ſpeak here the language of their Sect. They prove nothing, they only affirm. And ſo the Argument is no more than this; Miracles, Religion, the Pains

of

of Hell are falſe, becauſe *Epicurus*'s Doctrine was againſt them. A notable Proof indeed; were the Paſſages never ſo well handled: but, as ill Luck and worſe Ignorance would have it, he has maim'd and murder'd them both. Take that of *Horace* with the Author's Verſion;

Somnia, terrores Magicos, miracula, ſagas,
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Theſſala rides?

Are you ſo much above Superſtition, as to laugh at all Dreams, Panick Fears, Miracles, Witches, Ghoſts, and Prodigies.

Magicos terrores, *Panick Fears* in the Tranſlation: ſo very unhappily, that Both the words are wrong. For *Terrores* are not *Fears* here, the Internal paſſion of the mind; but External *Terrors*, the Tricks and Artifices of *Wizards* to fright, ſcare, and terrify. And then by ſubſtituting *Panick* for *Magick*; he has juſt ſerv'd *Horace* as he did *Cicero*; and made him talk compleat Nonſenſe. A general Fright, falling upon an Army or City, as if the Enemy was at the Camp or the Gates; when the Alarm was found to be falſe and groundleſs, the *Greeks* call'd a *Panick*, as if the God *Pan* was the Author of it. Now its plain, that theſe Frights (when there's probability in the Alarm, and the Enemy lies within due diſtance) can never be known to be *Panick* and Vain, till the buſineſs is over. In the mean time Wiſe and Fooliſh are both under the *Panick*: φεύγονται καὶ παῖδες θεῶν, ſays *Pindar*; *in ſuch Caſes the very Heroes, and Sons of the Gods run away.* What ſenſe therefore can he make of this *Engliſh*, he has beſtow'd on *Horace? are you ſo much above Superſtition, as to laugh at Panick Fears?* What, laugh in the beginning or hight of them? Here's a ſudden Alarm comes

at

at midnight, that all *Rome* is on Fire: is not *Horace* to ſtir out of his Bed, but to fall a *laughing*, and ly ſtill? A ſagacious Interpreter! not to reflect, that *Panick Fear* is no object of Superſtition; and conſequently could not come with the reſt of that Liſt in *Horace*. Unleſs his Worſhip will ſay, That the Precept here is, *to laugh at Panick Fears, after they are known to be ſo*. A merry Precept indeed! which Thoſe that were moſt ſcared, will be the readieſt to follow; when once their Fears are vaniſh'd, and the Alarm is over.

XX.

And now for the Paſſage of *Virgil*, and his accurate Tranſlation.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoſcere cauſas,
Atque metus omnes, & inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, ſtrepitumque Acherontis avari.

* *Happy is the Man, who has diſcover'd the Cauſes of Things, and is thereby cured of all kind of Fears, even of Death it ſelf, and all the Noiſe and Din of Hell.*

Happy, ſays the Poet, in the firſt place is the *Philoſopher*; in the ſecond the *Countryman*. Now under the notion of a Philoſopher, he deſcribes an *Epicurean*; having been bred under his Maſter *Sciron*, a Teacher in that Sect: and in Three lines he has admirably couch'd the principle Opinions, they were known by or valued themſelves upon, *That there's no Divine Providence, no Deſtiny nor Divination, and no Immortality of the Soul.*

Rerum cognoſcere cauſſas, diſcover the Cauſes of Things. Of what *Things*, and with what *Deſign?*

* *Pag.* 37.

Of

Of all the Meteors in the Heavens, Thunder, Lightening, *&c.* and of things on Earth, that are ſeemingly portentous and miraculous; in order to rid Men's minds of all Religion and its Fears. For in the *Epicurean* Scheme, *The Ignorance of Cauſes* was the ſole Cauſe of Religious Fears; as *Lucretius* averrs, with whoſe comfortable Lines our Author may here entertain himſelf:

Cetera, quae fieri in terris caeloque tuentur
Mortales, pavidis cùm pendent mentibu' ſaepe,
Efficiunt animos humiles formidine Divûm,
Depreſſoſque premunt ad terram; propterea quod
IGNORANTIA CAUSSARUM *conferre Deorum*
Cogit ad imperium res, & concedere regnum:
Quorum operum cauſſas *nulla ratione videre*
Poſſunt, ac fieri divino numine rentur.

'Tis plain therefore, what *Virgil* means by *Cauſes*: and then *Atque metus omnes ſubjecit pedibus, who has lain all Fears under the feet*, is as if he had ſaid, Has trampled and triumph'd over all Religion: for That the Poet underſtands here by *Fears*. METUS, *religio*; ſays *Nonius Marcellus*; for which he cites theſe Verſes of the *Aeneis*.

Laurus erat tecti medio in penetralibus altis,
Sacra comam, multoſque metu *ſervata per annos.*

Where *Servius* too agrees with him; METU, ſays he, *religione, quae naſcitur per timorem.* And ſo *Lucretius* very dreadfully paints *Religion*;

Quae caput a caeli regionibus oſtendebat,
Horribili ſuper aſpectu mortalibus inſtans.

Whence by the way you may obſerve, that the old Maſters in Atheiſm, as well as the Diſciples of the new Club, took ſhelter in their Syſtem out of pure *Dread* and *Fear*.

The next *Comma* of the Paſſage is *Inexorabile fatum*, *Inexorable Fate*; by which the Poet means, That the *Epicurean* Doctrine had trampled down the whole notion of *Deſtiny* and *Divination*. That the followers of that Sect denied Εἱμαρμένην καὶ Μαντικὴν, *Fate* and *Predictions*, is too vulgarly known, to be here prov'd or inſiſted on. And ſo we are come to the laſt Clauſe, *Strepitumque Acherontis avari*; where every one ſees the *Epicurean* Aſſertion, *That the Soul dies with the Body*.

To return now to our Learned Writer. How dextrouſly has he manag'd his Game; to bring a Paſſage, that bears full againſt all *Religion* whatever, as level'd againſt ſome ſmall Bigotries and *Superſtitious Fears*? And what a proper Inference has he added? *Well has* Virgil *ſpoke thus*; FOR *by Free-thinging alone, we know that God* made *and* governs *the World*. What, from this paſſage of *Virgil*, that's directly againſt *Creation* and *Providence*? Never ſure was poor FOR put ſo hard to't before, or imploy'd in ſuch bungling work. He underſtood not one line of the place, as will appear by his Verſion. *And is thereby cured*, ſays he, *of all kind of Fears, even of Death it ſelf*. What does the man talk of *cured*? Is *cured* the ſame with *ſubjecit pedibus*? Is the *cure* of one man's private *Fears* (any more than of his *Corns*) the ſame with *trampling under foot the fears of all Mankind*, and the whole Notion of Religion? For That, as I have ſaid, is the thought of the Poet, and is borrow'd from theſe lines of *Lucretius*.

Quare

Quare RELLIGIO PEDIBUS SUBJECTA *viciſſim*
Obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.

And then *Fatum inexorabile*, our wiſe Interpreter tranſlates it *Death*; which the very Epithet would have hinder'd; had he the leaſt taſt of good Writing: though he'd known nothing of *Fatis avolſa Voluntas*, *The Liberty of Will*, and Contingency of all Events, which *Epicurus* maintain'd againſt the *Stoics*. And yet, *The* DIVINE *Virgil*, ſays our judicious Author. He is very eaſily ſatisfied; if what little He comprehends of him, appears to have *Divinity* in it. For let the Poet be never ſo *Divine* in the Original; 'tis plain he's lower than *human* in this Writer's Verſion and Underſtanding.

XXI.

Between the two Paſſages of *Horace* and *Virgil*, our Author ſcatters a ſhort Reflection, that ſhews his mighty Learning. **The Evil*, ſays he, *of Superſtition is now much increas'd, and Men are under greater Terrors and Uneaſineſs of Mind, than Pagans of old poſſibly could be, when they thought they hazarded leſs.* This manifeſtly ſhews, that he thinks *Eternal Torments*, were never imagin'd in the *Pagan* Scheme, but were firſt introduc'd by Chriſtianity. Juſt contrary. The Vulgar in Paganiſm univerſally believ'd them, as his Friend *Lucretius* would have told him in expreſs Terms:

——— *Nam ſi certam finem eſſe viderent*
Aerumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
Relligionibus atque minis obſiſtere Fatum:

* Pag. 36.

Nunc ratio nulla eſt reſtandi, nulla facultas;
AETERNAS *quoniam* POENAS *in morte timendum.*

Nay this is the very thing, that our Writer quoted out of *Virgil*, *Strepitus Acherontis avari*, *the terrible Noiſe and Rumor of Acheron:* to have *trampled* upon which, would have been a fooliſh Boaſt of the *Epicureans*, if the generality of Mankind had not believ'd it. And what, pray, was the pretended Privilege of the famous *Eleuſinian* Rites at *Athens*, in which *Auguſtus* himſelf was initiated? Was it not, that the Partakers of them were convey'd into ſome happy Station after Death; while all the reſt of Men were for ever to be *rowld*, ἐν βορβόρῳ, *in dirt and mire* and other Scenes of Miſery. And yet how low even that *Happy State* was commonly thought, appears from the ſentiment of *Achilles*'s Ghoſt in *Homer*: Who, when he is complemented by *Ulyſſes* as the Happieſt of Men, both alive and dead; makes anſwer, That he had rather alive be a poor Day-Labourer to the meaneſt Peaſant, *than be Emperor of all the Dead:*

Ἦ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.

'Tis ſo falſe then, what our Author lays down here, That the Pagan Religion gave leſs uneaſineſs in Life, becauſe they thought they *hazarded leſs* after Death, than We Chriſtians think we do: that it's certain, they thought Bad men *hazarded* as *much* and Good men *obtain'd* infinitely *leſs*.

XXII.

XXII.

He comes now to a IV Argument for the abſolute neceſſity *of Free-thinking on Religious Queſtions*, and that * is *from the infinite number of Pretenders to Revelation:* which he afterwards dully repeats under another Head, in the † *Bramins, Perſees, Bonzes, Talapoins,* and *Dervizes,* to which he might have added ſeveral more. Now here is his perpetual Juggle about his Term of Art, *Free-thinking.* Take it in the common ſenſe, and we agree with him. Think *freely* on all the various Pretenſes to Revelation; compare the Counterfeit *Scriptures* with the True, and ſee the Divine Luſtre of the One, to which all the others ſerve as a Foil. It was upon this very account, that Chriſtians took the pains to tranſlate and publiſh them; not to confound Religion, but to confirm it. And yet the occult meaning of our Author is, From the variety of Scriptures to inſinuate none is true. An Argument as weak, as it's ſtale; and baffl'd over and over. Could this Reaſoning have any effect, Chriſtianity had never begun. For beſides the true *living Oracles* of the Jews, was not the whole World then full of falſe ones, written and divulg'd? and *Oracular Temples* (*or Churches* if he will) then in being to deliver out more? Even *ſuppoſe* Chriſtianity to be true; yet thoſe Impoſtures muſt neceſſarily be, while Human Nature is what it is: and our Scriptures have foretold it. Is That then a good Argument *backwards* againſt the Truth of any thing; which *a priori* is plain muſt happen ſo, tho' that Thing be *allow'd* to be true?

* *Pag.* 40. † *Pag.* 52.

But

But a very extraordinary Line has ſlip'd from our Author here; *If a man*, ſays he, *be under any Obligation to liſten to any Revelation at all.* This Thought it ſeems was a little *too Free*, and ſo a *Dele* corrects it in the Liſt of *Errata.* 'Tis very eaſy to ſift and toſs this fine Thought, which would afford good Diverſion: for beſides it's own ſillineſs, it contradicts all the reſt, and ſpoils the whole Grimace of the Book. But we'l ſpare it, ſince the Author himſelf has chaſtis'd it; at the hint (I ſuppoſe) of a graver Member of the Club: who was not for diſcovering the whole Farce at once, and ſhewing the Actors to be mere *Puppets.*

XXIII.

We have heard here of the much applauded Foundation of your *Society for propagating the Goſpel in Foreign Parts*; which this deſpicable Scribler, though he owns it is ſupported and encourag'd by * *Her moſt Excellent Majeſty*, and the Chief Perſons of the Kingdom, dares openly ridicule. This is much ſuch a ſawcy and ſlovenly *Freedom*, as the reſt of the *Greeks* laugh'd at in the Iſlanders of *Corfu*;

Ἐλευθέρα Κέρκυρα, χέζ' ὅπυ θέλεις,
Corcyra certe libera eſt; ubi vis, caca.

For our cleanly Author here aſſumes the like or worſe Licence, to lay his Filth and Ordure even upon the Throne and the Altar.

We envy not your due *Liberty*, the moſt valuable Bleſſing of good Government: but if ſuch Inſults, even upon Majeſty it ſelf and all that's accounted Sa-

* *Pag.* 41.

cred,

cred, are allow'd among you with Impunity, it gives no great Preſage of your laſting Proſperity;

——— *nimia illaec Licentia*
Profecto evadet in aliquod magnum malum.

But to leave unpleaſing Thoughts; and for once *to anſwer a Fool according to his Folly*. Are the *Talapoins of Siam* then to be put here upon a level with the whole *Clergy of England*, the Light and Glory (if they are not chang'd all on a ſudden) of preſent Chriſtianity? And this done by a ſorry Retailer of Atheiſtical Scraps, which he underſtands not three Lines of; but at the firſt offer of a Tranſlation betrays his Stupidity? Is He to *draw out your Divines*; whoſe Names we know not here, becauſe he has mangled 'em: but conclude them to be Men of Worth and Diſtinction, from the very Credit of his abuſing them: If he is once for *drawing out*, and reviving the old Trade of Ἀνδραποδοκαπηλία *ſelling and exporting of Men*; it may perhaps be found more ſerviceable to your Government, to oblige your *Eaſt India* Company to take on board the whole *Growing Sect*, and lodge them at *Madagaſcar* among their confeſs'd and claim'd Kindred (ſince they make Themſelves but a higher Species of Brutes) the *Monkeys* and the *Drills*: or to order your new *South Sea* Company to deliver them to the *Spaniards* as part of the *Aſſiento*, to be *Free-diggers* in the Mines there; and after a decent time in that *Purgatory to* convey them to their *Happy Country*, their * *Paradiſe of New Jerſy*; where neither *Prieſt*, nor *Phyſician*, nor *Lawyer* can moleſt them.

* *Pag.* 108.

XXIV.

Well, but VI*thly* * *The Goſpel it ſelf and our Saviour and his Apoſtles by their own Example, recommend Free-thinking.* Grant the Scribler this Argument; if *Free-thinking* is taken in its legitimate Senſe, as *Chillingworth*, *Hooker*, and *Wilkins* made uſe of that Freedom. But if he juggles, as uſually, in the Term of Art; what greater Nonſenſe, Than that Chriſt and his Diſciples ſhould recommend Atheiſm? But our Author's Learning is here again admirably diſplay'd. St. *Paul*, ſays he, *when he went into the Synagogues of the Jews, and reaſon'd with them, took a very extraordinary Step, as now it would be look'd on*: and ſo he compares it to PENN the *Quaker* going into St. *Pauls*, or Mr. WHISTON into the *Houſe of Convocation*, to reaſon there againſt the *Eſtabliſh'd Church*. *Penn*'s name has been long known among us in *Germany*; and the latter we have lately heard of in the *Journals* and *Bibliotheques*. But how ignorant and ſtupid is this Writer with his fooliſh Compariſons? The Fact, he ſpeaks of and quotes *Acts* XVII, 2, 3. was done at *Theſſalonica* a Pagan City in *Macedonia*: and was the *Jewiſh* Synagogue the *Eſtabliſh'd Church* there? or rather allow'd upon *Toleration*? But to pardon him this and ſuppoſe the thing done in *Judæa* it ſelf, where our Saviour often did the ſame: was it any thing like to *interrupting Divine Service*, or *diſturbing the Proceedings of a Synod*? Our Author knows not one tittle of the manner and cuſtom of a Synagogue. After reading a few Sections out of the Law and the Prophets; the ableſt men of the Aſſembly us'd to ſtand up and expound the Paſſages read: and if any

* *Pag.* 44.

Stranger

Stranger or perſon of Note chanc'd to be there; he was ask'd by them, if he had any Diſcourſe to impart to the Congregation. This is expreſly affirm'd by *Philo* the *Jew*, and others; and appears clearly from *Acts* XIII, 15. where at *Antioch* in *Piſidia* the Rulers of the Synagogue, ſeeing *Paul* and *Barnabas* Strangers there, *ſent unto them, ſaying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on.* So that if even *Penn* and *Whiſton* ſhould do no more, but ſpeak when deſir'd by Authority, it would be no *extraordinary ſtep* at all. The only *ſtep* here that appears *very extraordinary*, is our Author's bold Leaping into the Dark; and blundering about matters, where he's quite blind and ignorant.

XXV.

But he procedes in his Argument from our Saviour's Goſpel and Example; and declares it impoſſible, † *That Chriſt ſhould give ſo partial a Command, as to contain a Reſerve in behalf of any Set of Prieſts, in prejudice of the general Rules of Free-thinking.* Our Author is often very Orthodox, when he oppoſes what no body affirms, or affirms what no body oppoſes. And yet that very Orthodoxy is all Artifice and Craft, to inſinuate as if the Clergy did really maintain the one, or deny the other. Pray, who is it that challenges ſuch a *Reſerve*? He has named a *Reverend Doctor* here of his ſide: name another, if he can, that's againſt him. The thing he ſeems to contend for, is true and allow'd him: but he has given ſuch an awkward Reaſon for't, as would ſpoil his own Inference: if better Hands than His did not ſupport it. † *All the Prieſts upon Earth,*

† *Pag.* 46.

ſays he, *being* (in our Saviours life-time) *Enemies to Him aad his Goſpel, and He giving the privilege of Infallibility to no body beſides his Apoſtles; He could not be ſecure that any Prieſts could ever be otherwiſe.* Is the Stupidity of this greater, or the Impiety? Was not He *ſecure* of That, who declar'd, *He would be with his Church to the end of the World*; and That *The Gates of Hell ſhould never prevail againſt it*? But to let this paſs (for if I miſtake not our Author's Principles, he had rather be prov'd an Impious or Knaviſh Writer ten times, than a Silly one once) I affirm further, that this Aſſertion of his is abſolute Nonſenſe; though *Jeſus Chriſt* were *ſuppos'd* to be an Impoſtor. For his Argument lyes thus: Becauſe the *Jewiſh* and *Pagan* Prieſts were once Enemies to *Chriſt* and his Goſpel; He could not be *ſecure*, that *any* of his OWN Prieſts would ever be otherwiſe. A moſt powerful Syllogiſm! At this rate no Sect of Philoſophy, no Hereſy, nor Falſe Religion would ever have been ſet up or thought of. Becauſe all other Sects oppos'd *Zeno*, when he firſt founded *Stoiciſm*; he could not be *ſecure*, that the *Stoics* his own Followers would ever do otherwiſe. Becauſe *Socinus* found all People at firſt againſt Him and his Notions, he could not be *ſecure*, but that the very *Socinians* would always be as much againſt them. Becauſe all Prieſts abhor'd *Mahomet's Alcoran*, when firſt it was broach'd; He could not be *ſecure*, that his own *Mufties and Dervizes* would not always abhor it. This you'l ſay, is very ſtrange: but I'l concede our Author one thing, which looks a little parallel to't: That tho' He's the Chief of the *riſing and growing Sect*, and has publiſh'd their *New Goſpel*; he cannot be *ſecure*, that his own Fraternity and Members of the Club may not ſoon be aſham'd both of Him and It.

XXVI.

XXVI.

And now we come to a new Argument, *From the Conduct of the Prieſts*, which by a tedious Induction is branch'd out into Ten Inſtances, and takes up half a hundred Pages. And what will be the grand Reſult?

Nae iſte hercle magno jam conatu magnas nugas dixerit.

The Sum of it is no more than this, *The Prieſts cannot agree among themſelves about ſeveral points of Doctrin, the Attributes of God, The Canon of Scripture*, &c. *and therefore I'le be of no Religion at all.* This threadbare obſolete Stuff, the moſt obvious ſurmiſe that any wavering Fool catches at, when he firſt warps towards Atheiſm, is dreſs'd up here as if it was ſome new and formidable buſineſs.

What great feats can our Author now promiſe himſelf from This; which, after it has been tried Age after Age, never had influence on Mankind, either in Religious Concerns, or Common Life? *Till all agree, I'l ſtand Neuter.* Very well; and till all the World ſpeaks one Language, pray be You mute and ſay nothing. It were much the wiſer way; than to talk as you have done. By this Rule, the *Roman* Gentry were to learn no Philoſophy at all, till the *Greeks* could unite into one Sect; nor make uſe of any Phyſician, till the *Empirics* and *Methodiſts* concurr'd in their way of Practiſe. How came Chriſtianity to *begin*; ſince the Objection now brought to *pull it down* was as viſible and potent then as now? or how has it ſubſiſted ſo long; ſince all the preſent Diſcord in Opinions does not near amount to the Sum of what *Epiphanius* alone collected a-

bove a Thouſand Years ago? Nay how came our Author's new Sect to be *Riſing* and *Growing*; ſince the Atheiſts are as much at variance among themſelves, and can ſettle and centre in nothing? Or if they ſhould reſolve to conſpire in one certain Syſtem; they would be *Atheiſts* indeed ſtill, but they would loſe the Title of *Free-thinkers*.

This is the Total of his long Induction; but let us ſee his Conduct in the parts of it. Some *Fathers* thought *God to be Material*; this He has ſaid and I have anſwer'd before in *Remark* the X. * *Several antient Chriſtian Prieſts of Egypt were ſo groſs, as to conceive God to be in the ſhape of a Man.* If they did ſo, they were no more *groſs* than His Maſter *Epicurus*, who was of the very ſame Opinion. But it's fatal to our Author, ever to blunder when he talks of *Egypt*. Theſe *Prieſts of Egypt* were all illiterate *Laymen*, the Monks or Hermits of thoſe Days, that retir'd into the Deſert, the fitteſt place for their Stupidity. † *But ſeveral of Your Engliſh Divines tax each other with Atheiſm*, either poſitively, or conſequently. Wonderfull! and ſo becauſe Three or Four Divines in Your Iſland are too fierce in their Diſputes, all We on the great Continent muſt abandon Religion. Yes, but the ¶ *Bramins*, the *Mahometans* &c. *pretend to Scriptures as well as We.* This too has come once already, and is conſider'd in *Remark* the XXII. but being ſo great a piece of News, deſerv'd to be told twice. And who, without his telling, would have known, that the ** *Romiſh* Church receiv'd the *Apocrypha*, as Canonical? Be that as it will; I am ſure it is unheard of News, that Your Church receives them as *** *Half Canonical.* I find no ſuch word in Your

* Pag. 47. † Pag. 48. ¶ Pag. 52. ** Pag. 53. *** Pag. 53.

Arti-

Articles; nor ever ſaw a *ſuch-like Prodigy* before. *Half Canonical*? what Idea, what Senſe has it? 'tis exactly the ſame, as *Half Divine*, *Half Infinite*, *Half Omnipotent*. But away with his *Apocrypha*; He'l like it the worſe while he lives, for the ſake of *Bel and the Dragon*.

XXVII.

But now to make room for his Learning again: for * *the Rabbi's*, ſays he, *among the Samaritans, who now live at Sichem in Paleſtine, receive the five Books of Moſes for their Scripture; the Copy whereof is very different from Ours*. What ſhall I admire moſt, his Ignorance, or his Impudence? Why the RABBI's at *Sichem*, excluſive and by way of Diſtinction? Do's not the whole *Samaritan* Nation receive the Pentateuch, as well as their *Rabbi's*? 'Tis juſt as if he had ſaid; *Among the Engliſh, the Reverend Divines receive the Bible*. But is not Their Copy of the five Books of *Moſes* VERY DIFFERENT from Ours? No queſtion he has often affirm'd This with great Sufficiency at his Club; though he does not know one Letter of the Language. The *Samaritan* Pentateuch has now been printed above half a Century; and the various Readings, wherein it differs from the *Jewiſh* have been twice collected and publiſh'd, even to the minuteſt Letter; firſt by *Morinus* at *Paris*, and afterwards anew by Your *Walton* at *London*, both of them *Prieſts*. I have perus'd thoſe Various Lections; and do affirm here on my own Knowledge, That thoſe Two Copies differ no more from each other; than the ſame Book, (*Terence*, *Tully*, *Ovid*, or the like) differs from it ſelf, in the ſeveral Ma-

* *Pag.* 53.

nuſcripts

nuſcripts that I my ſelf have examin'd. So that it's a plain demonſtration, that the Copies were originally the ſame: nor can better Evidence be deſir'd, that the *Jewiſh* Bibles have not been corrupted or interpolated, than this very Book of the *Samaritans*; which, after above 2000 Years Diſcord between the Two Nations, varies as little from the Other, as any *Claſſic* Author in leſs tract of Time has diſagreed from it ſelf, by the unavoidable Slips and Miſtakes of ſo many Tranſcribers. And now does not our Author come off victoriouſly with his *Rabbi*'s of *Sichem*?

Well, but the * *Samaritans have a Chronicon, or Hiſtory of themſelves from Moſes's time, which is lodg'd in the public Library at* Leyden, *and has never been printed: and this is quite different from That contain'd in the Hiſtorical Books of the Old Teſtament.* Here's now a ſly Inſinuation of ſome great Diſcoveries to be made out of this Book. And yet the mighty Matter is no more than this. *Joſeph Scaliger* above a Hundred years ago procured this Book from *Sichem*, and left It among others by his will to the Library at *Leyden*. There it's name has long appear'd in the Printed Catalogue; it has been tranſcrib'd more than once, and one Copy, formerly Profeſſor *Golius's*, has fal'n into the Hands of my Learned Friend Mr. *Reland* at *Utrecht:* whereof take his own Account. 'Tis call'd *The Book of Joſhua*, but it's Author is not named; 'tis written in *Arabic*; ſince *Mahomet's* time moſt certainly, but how much ſince, is not known: it pretends to be a Tranſlation from the *Hebrew*, but it's only it's own Voucher; there being no Fame now remaining of any ſuch Original. It conſiſts of about L Chapters; XXXIX of which make the ſole Story of *Joſhua*; ſix Chapters more

* *Pag.* 53.

reach

reach as low as *Nebuchadnezzar*; the very next comes to *Alexander* the Great, and his *Travels thorow the Air*; the next makes a long ſtride to the Emperor *Hadrian*; and Two more to the time of *Alexander Severus*. This is the Noble *Chronicle*, that our judicious *Free-thinker* would place above the Bible; when the very *Sichemites* do not place it ſo high, as his own Jargon *Half-Canonical*. 'Tis pitty a man of ſo fine a Taſt, and the *Maecenas* of the new Club, (ſince he hints with ſuch concern, that *it is not yet publiſh'd*) ſhould not be oblig'd at his own Charge to get it tranſlated and printed.

XXVIII.

The very View of the following Pages fills me with Diſdain, to ſee ſuch common Stuff brought in with an Air of Importance. **Hebrew and Septuagint*; *Goſpels according to the Hebrews and Aegyptians*: *The Traditions of Matthias, and the Secrets of Peter*: *Apoſtolic Conſtitutions, and Goſpel of James*; *and the different Notions of Prieſts concerning Inſpiration*. And what of all theſe, or half a Hundred more, that my Learned and *Lutheran* Friend Dr. *Fabricius* has amaſs'd together? Has our Author a mind to read and *think* of them? Think *freely* and welcome: for I ſuppoſe that was the deſign my Friend had in the publication. Or is he rather at his old Play, that he'l regard no Scripture at all, till all Chriſtians among themſelves, and *Talapoins* with them, can agree? *Jubeas ſtultum eſſe libenter*: let him have licence to play the Fool; ſince he anſwers his own Argument, in the very words where he puts it. † *For, All*, ſays he, *who build their Religion on Books, muſt from the nature of things*

* *Pag.* 54. † *Pag.* 56.

var

vary about the Books themſelves, their Copies, and their Inſpiration. Here's now both the Poiſon and the Antidote in One. For if it's neceſſary *from the nature of things*, that men ſhall ſo differ in their Opinions; that Difference is no Argument *backwards* to prove the falſeneſs of all thoſe Books. Unleſs the man will prove *a priori*, that Revelation ought not, cannot, be communicated and convey'd to us in *Books*. Which when he performs; or finds out a better Method; it ſhall be allow'd to be the firſt Inſtance of *Science* or *Art*, that the *Growing Sect* has invented.

XXIX.

But, notwithſtanding he has fore-anſwer'd *from the nature of things* all that he can ſay about *Different Interpretations*, yet he proceeds in xx tedious Pages to enumerate thoſe Differences, which he ranges under xii Heads; and before them puts a long Preamble out of your Learned Biſhop *Taylor*. That Prelate, it ſeems, has with great acuteneſs and eloquence diſplay'd the Difficulties in acquiring a full and perfect knowledge of all the abſtruſe places of Scripture; affirming at the ſame time, That all the Neceſſaries to Salvation and Moral Duties are deliver'd there moſt clearly and openly. Well, and what does our wiſe Author gain from the Biſhop's Confeſſion? Has not He himſelf gone a great deal further, and made *all the* * *Sciences and Arts*, every imaginable part of knowledge, to be requiſite *towards having a juſt notion of that miſcellaneous Book, the Bible*? If it be ſo; what wonder is it (nay what Miracle were it otherwiſe) that in an allow'd Freedom of *Thinking* and *Printing* your *Engliſh* Divines

* *Pag.* 11.

ſhould

ſhould have different Opinions? nay that the ſelf-ſame Man by advances in Age and by progreſs in Study ſhould differ from Himſelf? I have run over the Citations here out of *Taylor*; and find ſcarce one of thoſe Difficulties ſo peculiar to Scripture, as not to be common to other Authors: to know which with exactneſs, as becomes every Writer (eſpecially a declar'd Adverſary to a whole Order profeſſing Learning) is no eaſy and perfunctory matter: as our Author to his ſhame and ſorrow may hereafter find and feel.

His XII Heads of Difference he has diſpos'd in this order: *The Nature and Eſſence of the Divine Trinity, The Importance of that Article of Faith, The Specific Body at the Reſurrection, Predeſtination, Eternal Torments, Sabbath or Lord's-Day, Epiſcopacy, Original Sin, Our Saviour's Human Soul, Lay-Baptiſm, Uſury, and the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate in matters Eccleſiaſtical.* About all theſe Points and ſeveral others He could name, ſome of your *Engliſh* Divines, it ſeems, for want of *good Conduct* have had Conteſts and Diſputes: A moſt ſurpriſing piece of News! to You, as if none had heard of thoſe Books till this Diſcovery; and to Us, as if We were intirely free from the like Diſputations.

Now what would our Author have here? Is he angry, that All cannot agree? or will he make himſelf the Arbitrator? If he'l be *Umpire* in all theſe Queſtions, he has full Liberty of *Thinking*; the Path is beaten before him; he may chuſe what Side he inclines to, or coin new Notions of his own. As Your Church has not yet anathematiz'd nor cenſur'd any of theſe Divines; ſo He needs not turn Atheiſt on theſe accounts, to purchaſe the right of *Free-thinking*.

But if he's *angry* that All agree not, and thinks

it a Diſgrace to Religion; or reſolves to meddle with None of them, till All are unanimous: he muſt be put in mind of what he lately mention'd, *The Nature of Things.* For if he *forbids* Thinking on *abſtruſe* Queſtions, he contradicts his whole Book, which aſſerts Men's Right and Title *to think de quolibet ente:* but if he *allows* them to think on them; diverſity of Opinions will neceſſarily follow *from the Nature of the Things.* For how can Men keep the ſame Tract, where all walk in the Dark? Or how can they agree in one Story, where all tell their own Dreams? If Men needs will be prying into the hidden Myſteries of Heaven; they'l certainly court a Cloud inſtead of a Goddeſs: yet ſuch Diſcoverers and Projectors there ever will be; and in *Divinity*, as well as *Geometry*, we have *Squarers of the Circle.*

XXX.

A ſecond Inſtance of Your *Engliſh* Clergy's bad Conduct, is their owning **the Doctrines of the Church to be contradictory to one another and to Reaſon*; a III*d* their owning † *Abuſes, Defects, and Falſe Doctrines in the Church*; a IV*th* their profeſſing ¶ *That they will not tell the Truth*; a V*th* their * *charging the moſt judicious Men of their own Order with Atheiſm, Deiſm, or Socinianiſm.* Now as theſe Accuſations reach no further than ſome Particulars among You; Our Church here is not in the leaſt, and Yours (I think) is not much concern'd in them. If the Author really has not wrong'd them (as his uſual Unfairneſs gives cauſe for Suſpicion) it will be prudence in them to Learn even from an Enemy; and to ſpeak hereafter with more caution and

* *Pag.* 76. † *Pag.* 79. ¶ *Pag.* 82. * *Pag.*85.

diſcretion.

diſcretion. All that a Stranger can do here, is to leave the Perſons to their own proper Defenſe; and the ſuppos'd *Abuſes and Falſe Doctrines* in your Church, to your own either refuting the Charge, or remedying the Defect. For what would our *Lutherans* here ſay of Me; if I ſhould pretend to maintain, that Your Church has no Blemiſh at all? though we juſtly eſteem and honour it next to our Own.

XXXI.

But a VI*th* Inſtance of their ill Conduct, is their * *Rendring the Canon of the Scripture uncertain.* This is a heavy Charge indeed; and, if they do not clear and vindicate themſelves, We, as well as this Author, muſt call them to account. But what's the ground of the Indictment? *Why Dr.* Grabe, *Dr.* Mill, *with ſome others, affirm, that no Canon was made till above* LX *Years after the Death of Chriſt.* If this be all; he has verify'd the Sentence in the Comedy.

Homine imperito numquam quicquam injuſtius'ſt.

For pray, what's the Notion of the word *Canon*? An intire collection of the Sacred Writings, to be a *Rule, Standard, and Syſtem* to Chriſtianity. Now according to thoſe Doctors and the plain matter of Fact, all the Books of the New Teſtament were not *written* till the Year of Chriſt XCVII, and That is, *above* LX *years after the Death of Chriſt.* What ſenſe is there in this complaint then? that the Books were not collected before they were made? All the Books we now receive for Canonical were writ occaſionally

* *Pag.* 68.

caſionally between the Years LII and XCVII. And during that Interval of XLV years; every Book, in the Places whither it was ſent or where it was known, was immediatly as Sacred and Canonical, as ever it was after. Nor did the Church loiter and delay in making a Canon or Collection of them; for within Two years after the Writing of St. *John*'s Goſpel the *Evangelical Canon* was fix'd: and within X after That, an *Epiſtolical Canon* was made: quick enough, if it be conſider'd, that they were to be gather'd (whither they had been directed) from ſo many and ſo diſtant parts of the World. So that it's plain to me, this Collector of Scraps did not know what a *Canon* or Collection meant. I'l borrow his Argument for one minute, and try it upon ſome Claſſic Authors. It's very plain, that *Martial* publiſh'd every ſingle Book of Epigrams by it ſelf, One generally every year; only ſometimes he delay'd two or three. And ſo *Horace* (as Your *Bentleius* has lately ſhown) ſet out his ſeveral Books occaſionally, from the XXVI to the LI year of his Life. Now in the reaſoning of our acute Writer, I'l prove ſeveral Books of thoſe Two Authors to be *uncertain* and of dubious Authority. For what do you tell me of the Firſt Book of the one's *Epigrams*, and of the other's *Satirs*? How do I know that thoſe are genuine; when the *Canon* of *Martial* and *Horace* was not fix'd and ſettl'd, till above XX years after Thoſe are pretended to be written? Is not this Argument moſt ſtrong, cogent, and irrefragable? So very valuable and precious; that bear witneſs I now return it ſafe and ſound to it's Poſſeſſor and Author.

XXXII.

XXXII.

Yes! but poor Dr. MILL has ſtill more to anſwer for: and meets with a ſorry recompenſe for his long Labour of xxx years. For if we are to believe not only this wiſe Author, but a wiſer Doctor of your own, He was * *labouring* all that while, *to prove the Text of Scripture precarious:* having ſcrap'd together ſuch an immenſe Collection of *Various Readings*, as amount in the whole by a late Author's computation, to above Thirty Thouſand. Now this is a matter of ſome Conſequence, and will well deſerve a few Reflexions.

I am forc'd to confeſs with grief, That ſeveral well meaning Prieſts, of greater Zeal than Knowledge, have often by their own falſe Alarms and *Panic* both frighted others of their own ſide, and given advantage to their Enemies. What an uproar once was there, as if All were ruin'd and undone, when *Capellus* wrote One Book againſt the Antiquity of the *Hebrew Points*, and Another for *Various Lections* in the Hebrew Text it ſelf? And yet Time and Experience has cur'd them of thoſe imaginary Fears: and the great Author in his Grave has now that Honour univerſally, which the Few only of his own age paid him, when alive.

The Caſe is and will be the ſame with Your Learned Country-man Dr. MILL; whoſe Friendſhip (while I ſtaid at *Oxford*) and Memory will ever be dear to me. For what is it, that your WHITBYUS ſo inveighs and exclaims at? The Doctor's Labours, ſays he, make the whole Text precarious; and expoſe both the Reformation to the *Papiſts*. and Religion it ſelf to the *Atheiſts*. God forbid!

* *Pag.* 88.

forbid! we'l ſtill hope better things. For ſurely thoſe *Various Readings* exiſted before in ſeveral Exemplars; Dr. *Mill* did not make and coin them, he only exhibited them to our View. If Religion therefore was true before, though ſuch Various Readings were in being: it will be as true and conſequently as ſafe ſtill, though every body ſees them. Depend on't; no Truth, no matter of Fact fairly laid open, can ever ſubvert True Religion.

The 30000 Various Lections are allow'd then and confeſs'd: and if more Copies yet are collated, the Sum will ſtill mount higher. And what's the Inference from this? why, one *Gregory*, here quoted, infers, * *That no Profane Author whatever has ſuffer'd ſo much by the hand of Time, as the New Teſtament has done.* Now if this ſhould be found utterly falſe; and if the *Scriptural Text* has no more Variations, than what muſt neceſſarily have happen'd from *the Nature of Things*, and what are common and in equal proportion in all Claſſics whatever; I hope this *Panic* will be remov'd, and the Text be thought as firm as before.

If there had been but One Manuſcript of the *Greek* Teſtament, at the reſtoration of Learning about Two Centuries ago; then we had had no *Various Readings* at all. And would the Text be in a better condition then, than now we have 30000? So far from That; that in the beſt ſingle Copy extant we ſhould have had Hundreds of Faults, and ſome Omiſſions irreparable. Beſides that the Suſpicions of Fraud and Foul Play would have been increas'd immenſly.

It is good therefore, you'l allow, to have more Anchors than One; and another *MS.* to join with the firſt would give more Authority, as well as Se-

* *Pag.* 88.

curity.

curity. Now chuſe that Second where you will, there ſhall be a Thouſand Variations from the Firſt; and yet Half or More of the Faults ſtill remain in them Both.

A Third therefore, and ſo a Fourth, and ſtill on, are deſirable; that by a joint and mutual help All the Faults may be mended: ſome Copy preſerving the True Reading in one place, and ſome in another. And yet the more Copies you call to aſſiſtance, the more do the Various Readings multiply upon you: every Copy having its peculiar ſlips, though in a principal Paſſage or two it do ſingular ſervice. And this is Fact, not only in the New Teſtament, but in all Antient Books whatever.

'Tis a good Providence and a great Bleſſing, That ſo many Manuſcripts of the New Teſtament are ſtill amongſt us; ſome procur'd from *Egypt*, others from *Aſia*, others found in the *Weſtern* Churches. For the very Diſtances of Places, as well as Numbers of the Books, demonſtrate; that there could be no Colluſion, no altering nor interpolating One Copy from another, nor All by any of them.

In Profane Authors (as they are call'd) whereof one Manuſcript only had the good luck to be preſerv'd, as *Velleius Paterculus* among the *Latins*, and *Heſychius* among the *Greeks*; the Faults of the Scribes are found ſo numerous, and the Defects beyond all redreſs, that notwithſtanding the Pains of the Learnedſt and acuteſt Critics for Two whole Centuries, thoſe Books are ſtill and are like to continue a mere Heap of Errors. On the contrary, where the Copies of any Author are numerous, though the *Various Readings* always increaſe in Proportion; there the Text by an accurate Collation of them made by skilful and judicious Hands is e-

ver

ver the more correct, and comes nearer to the true words of the Author.

Were the very Originals of Antient Books ſtill in being; thoſe alone would ſuperſede the uſe of all other Copies: but ſince That was impoſſible *from the Nature of Things*, ſince Time and Caſualties muſt conſume and devour All; the ſubſidiary Help is from the various Tranſcripts convey'd down to us, when compar'd and examin'd together.

Terence is now in one of the beſt conditions of Any of the Claſſic Writers; the oldeſt and beſt Copy of him is now in the Vatican Library, which comes neareſt to the Poets own hand: but even That has Hundreds of Errors, moſt of which may be mended out of other Exemplars, that are otherwiſe more recent and of inferior value. I my ſelf have collated ſeveral; and do affirm that I have ſeen 20000 Various Lections in that little Author, not near ſo big as the whole *New Teſtament*: and am morally ſure, that if Half the number of Manuſcripts were collated for *Terence* with that Niceneſs and Minuteneſs which has been uſed in Twice as many for the *New Teſtament*, the number of the *Variations* would amount to above 50000.

In the Manuſcripts of the *New Teſtament* the Variations have been noted with a Religious, not to ſay Superſtitious Exactneſs. Every difference in Spelling, in the ſmalleſt Particle or Article of Speech, in the very Order or Collocation of words without real change, has been ſtudiouſly regiſtred. Nor has the Text only been ranſack'd, but all the Antient Verſions, the *Latin Vulgate*, *Italic*, *Syriac*, *Aethiopic*, *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Gothic*, and *Saxon*; nor theſe only, but all the deſpers'd Citations of the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers in a courſe of 500 years. What wonder

der then, if with all this ſcrupulous ſearch in every hole and corner, the Varieties riſe to 30000? when in all Antient Books of the ſame Bulk, whereof the MSS are numerous, the Variations are as many or more; and yet no Verſions to ſwell the Reckoning.

The Editors of Profane Authors do not uſe to trouble their Readers, or risk their own Reputation, by an uſeleſs Liſt of every ſmall ſlip committed by a lazy or ignorant Scribe. What is thought commendable in an Edition of Scripture, and has the name of Fairneſs and Fidelity, would in Them be deem'd Impertinence and Trifling. Hence the Reader not vers'd in antient MSS is deceiv'd into an Opinion, that there were no more Variations in the Copies, than what the Editor has communicated. Whereas, if the like ſcrupulouſneſs was obſerv'd in regiſtring the ſmalleſt Changes in Profane Authors, as is allow'd, nay requir'd in Sacred; the now formidable number of 30000 would appear a very Trifle.

'Tis manifeſt, that Books in Verſe are not near ſo obnoxious to Variations, as Proſe: the Tranſcriber, if he is not wholy ignorant and ſtupid, being guided by the Meaſures; and hindred from ſuch Alterations, as do not fall in with the Laws of Numbers. And yet even in Poets, the Variations are ſo very many, as can hardly be conceiv'd without uſe and experience. In the late Edition of *Tibullus*, by the Learned Mr. *Broukhuiſe*, you have a Regiſter of *Various Lections* in the cloſe of that Book; where you may ſee at the firſt View that they are as many as the Lines. The ſame is viſible in *Plautus*, ſet out by *Pareus*. I my ſelf, during my Travels, have had the opportunity to examin ſeveral MSS of the Poet *Manilius*; and can aſſure

you, thar the Variations I have met with are twice as many as all the Lines of the Book. Our Diſcourſer here has quoted Nine Verſes out of it, p. 151: in which, though one of the eaſieſt Places, I can ſhew him XIV Various Lections. Add likewiſe, that the MSS here uſed were Few in compariſon: and then do You imagin, what the Lections would amount to, if Ten times as many (the Caſe of Dr. *Mill*) were accurately examin'd. And yet in theſe and all other Books, the Text is not made more *precarious* on that account, but more certain and authentic. So that if I may adviſe you; when you here more of this Scarecrow of 30000, be neither aſtoniſh'd at the Sum, nor in any pain for the Text.

'Tis plain to Me, that your Learned *Whitbyus*, in his Invective againſt my Dead Friend, was ſuddenly ſurpriz'd with a *Panic*; and under his deep concern for the *Text* did not reflect at all what that Word really means. The preſent Text was firſt ſettled almoſt 200 years ago out of ſeveral MSS by *Robert Stephens* a Printer and Bookſeller at *Paris:* whoſe beautiful and (generally ſpeaking) accurate Edition has been ever ſince counted the Standard, and follow'd by all the reſt. Now this ſpecific *Text* in your Doctor's Notion ſeems taken for the Sacred Original in every Word and Syllable: and if the Conceit is but ſpread and propagated, within a few Years that *Printer*'s Infallibility will be as zealouſly maintain'd as an *Evangeliſt*'s or *Apoſtle*'s.

Dr. MILL, were he alive, would confeſs to Your Doctor, That this *Text* fix'd by a Printer is ſometimes by the Various Readings render'd *uncertain*, nay is prov'd certainly wrong. But then he would ſubjoin, That the Real Text of the Sacred Writers does not now (ſince the Originals have been ſo long loſt)

loſt) ly in any ſingle MS or Edition; but is diſpers'd in them all. 'Tis competently exact indeed, even in the worſt MS now extant: nor is One Article of Faith or Moral Precept either perverted or loſt in them; chuſe as awkwardly as you can, chuſe the worſt by deſign, out of the whole Lump of Readings. But the leſſer matters of Diction, and among ſeveral ſynonymous Expreſſions the Very Words of the Writer, muſt be found out by the ſame Induſtry and Sagacity that is uſed in other Books; muſt not be risk'd upon the credit of any particular MS or Edition, but be ſought, acknowledg'd, and challeng'd, where-ever they are met with.

Stephens follow'd what he found in the King of *France*'s Copies, Acts xxvii, 14. Ἄνεμος Τυφωνικὸς, ὁ καλούμενος ΕΥΡΟΚΛΥΔΩΝ: and He is follow'd by Your Tranſlators, *There aroſe againſt it a tempeſtuous Wind, called EVRÖCLYDÖN.* This Reading perhaps your Learned Doctor would not have now be made *precarious:* but if that Printer had had the uſe of Your *Alexandrian* MS, which exhibits here ΕΥΡΑΚΥΛΩΝ; it's very likely he would not have given it the Preference in his Text: and then the Doctor upon his own Principle muſt have ſtickled for This.

The Wind *Euroclydon* was never heard of but here: it's compounded of εὖρος and κλύδων, the *Wind* and the *Waves:* and it ſeems plain *a priori* from the diſparity of thoſe two Ideas, that they could not be join'd in one Compound: nor is there any other example of the like Compoſition.

But Ευρακύλων, or as the Vulgar *Latin* here has it, *Euroaquilo* (approv'd by *Grotius* and others) is ſo appoſite to the Context, and to all the Circumſtances

of the Place; that it may fairly challenge admittance, as the word of St. *Luke*. 'Tis true, according to *Vitruvius*, *Seneca*, and *Pliny*, who make *Eurus* to blow from the Winter Solſtice, and *Aquilo* between the Summer Solſtice and the North Point; there can be no ſuch Wind nor Word as *Euroaquilo*: becauſe the *Solanus* or *Apheliotes* from the Cardinal Point of Eaſt comes between them. But *Eurus* is here to be taken, as *Gellius* (II, 22,) and the *Latin* Poets uſe it, for the middle Aequinoctial Eaſt, the ſame as *Solanus*: and then in the Table of XII Winds according to the Antients, between the two Cardinal Winds *Septentrio* and *Eurus*, there are two at ſtated diſtances *Aquilo* and Καικίας. The *Latins* had no *known name* for Καικίας: *Quem ab oriente ſolſtitiali excitatum Graeci* Καικίαν *vocant, apud nos ſine nomine eſt*: ſays *Seneca Nat. Quæſt.* V. 16. Καικίας therefore blowing between *Aquilo* and *Eurus*; the Roman Seamen (for want of a ſpecific word) might expreſs the ſame Wind by the compound name *Euroaquilo*; in the ſame Analogy as the Greeks call Εὐρόνοτος the middle Wind between *Eurus* and *Notus*; and as we ſay now *South Eaſt*, and *North Eaſt*. Since therefore we have now found that *Euroaquilo* was the *Roman* Mariner's word for the Greek Καικίας; there will ſoon appear a juſt reaſon, why St. *Luke* calls it ἄνεμος τυφωνικὸς, *a Tempeſtuous Wind, vorticoſus*, a whirling Wind: for that's the peculiar character of Καικίας in thoſe Climates; as appears from ſeveral Authors and from that known Proverbial Verſe,

Ἕλκων ἐφ' αὑτὸν ὡς ὁ Καικίας νέφη.

So that with ſubmiſſion, I think our *Luther's* and the *Daniſh* Verſion have done more right, than Your

Engliſh

Engliſh, to the Sacred Text, by tranſlating it NORD OST, *North Eaſt*; though according to the preſent Compaſs divided into XXXII, *Euroaquilo* anſwers neareſt to OST NORD OST, *Eaſt North Eaſt*; which is the very Wind that would directly drive the Ship from *Crete* to the *African Syrtis*, according to the Pilot's Fears, in the 17 verſe.

The *Alexandrian* Copy then, though it has vaſtly increas'd the number of Readings, as you ſee in Your *Polyglott* and Dr. *Mill*'s Edition, has been of excellent uſe here; and ſo in many other places: retrieving to us the true Original, where other Copies fail'd. And what damage, if all the other Copies of near the ſame Antiquity, which Mr. *Montfaulcon* has diſcover'd and Dr. *Mill* never ſaw, were ſometime collated as exactly, and all the Varieties publiſh'd; let the Thouſands grow never ſo many?

When the Doctor is ſo alarm'd at the vaſt Sum of 30000; he ſeems to take it for granted, that within that number the very Original is every where found; and the only complaint is, that True are ſo blended with Falſe, that they can hardly be diſcover'd. If that were the only difficulty; ſome abler Heads than Ours would ſoon find a remedy: in the mean time I can aſſure him, that if That be the Caſe, the *New Teſtament* has ſuffer'd *leſs injury by the hand of Time than any Profane Author*; there being not One Antient Book beſides it in the World, that with all the help of Various Lections (be they 50000 if you will) does not ſtand in further want of emendation by true Critic: nor is there one good Edition of Any, that has not inſerted into the Text (though every Reader knows it not) what no Manuſcript vouches.

'Tis plain indeed, that if Emendations are true, they muſt have once been in ſome Manuſcripts; at

at leaſt in the Author's Original: but it does not follow that becauſe no Manuſcript now exhibits them, none more antient ever did. Slips and Errors (while the Art of Printing was unknown) grew preſently and apace; even while the Author was alive. *Martial* tells us himſelf, how one of his Admirers was ſo curious, that he ſent a Copy of his Poems which he had bought, to be * *emended* by his own hand. And we certainly know from † *Gellius*, that even ſo early as *Hadrian*'s time and before, the common Copies of *Virgil* had ſeveral miſtakes.

Not frighted therefore with the preſent 30000, I for my part, and (as I believe) many others would not lament, if out of the Old Manuſcripts yet untouch'd 10000 more were faithfully collected: ſome of which without queſtion would render the Text more beautifull, juſt, and exact; though of no conſequence to the main of Religion, nay perhaps wholy Synonymous in the view of Common Readers, and quite inſenſible in any modern Verſion.

If all thoſe remaining Manuſcripts were diligently perus'd; perhaps one might find in ſome or one of them a new Various Lection in 1 *Tim.* VI, 3. Εἴ τις ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ, καὶ μὴ ΠΡΟΣΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ ὑγιαίνουσι λόγοις τοῖς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ. For though the Senſe of Προσέρχεται is ſo fix'd by the adjacent words, that no Verſion has miſtaken it, *conſents not to, acquieſces not in, the wholſome words of our Saviour:* yet the Propriety does not appear in the Original, no example of that Phraſe having yet been given. If ſome Manuſcript then ſhould have it Προσέχεται or Προσίχεται, *cleave and adhere to the wholſome words;* who has reaſon to be angry at that

* *Martial* VII, 10. † *Gellius* I, 21. IX, 14.

Variati-

Variation? But I ſhould ſooner expect to find ΠΡΟ ΣΕΧΕΙ; becauſe προσέχειν λόγοις *to give heed, attend, obſerve, liſten, obey*, is a known Phraſe as well in Sacred as Profane Authors. So II *Peter* 1, 19. ᾧ λόγῳ καλῶς προσέχοντες. *Proverbs* 1, 24. Ἐξέτεινον λόγους, καὶ οὐ προσείχετε. *Jerem.* VI, 19. Τοῖς λόγοις μου οὐ προσέχου. So in other places of the LXX, Προσέχειν ῥήσει, ῥήμασι, νόμῳ, ἐντολαῖς. So to the ſame effect. *Acts* VIII, 6. προσέχειν τοῖς λεγομένοις XVI, 14. τοῖς λαλουμένοις. *Heb.* 1, 1. τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσι. *Tit.* 1, 14. μύθοις. And laſtly its join'd with the ſame word ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, 1. *Tim.* 1, 4. Μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, μηδὲ ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕΙΝ μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις. If a ſearch therefore was made in the Manuſcripts abroad, and this Lection ſhould chance to be found there; what detriment would it bring either to the Authority or Beauty of the Text?

In the Epiſtle of *Jude v.* 18. the general ſenſe is clear and palpable; *Mockers in the laſt time,* κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν, *who walk after their own ungodly luſts.* But if one of thoſe Manuſcripts inſtead of ἀσεβειῶν ſhould exhibit ΑΣΕΛΓΕΙΩΝ, *laſcivious, wanton, filthy Luſts*: as thoſe Two words are join'd 1 *Pet.* IV, 3. πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, *who walked in Laſciviouſneſs and Luſts*; and II *Pet.* II, 18. ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς, ἀσελγείαις, *The Luſts of the fleſh and Wantonneſs:* though the Senſe of both may perhaps be equivalent, yet it's not Nothing, to add a juſtneſs and propriety of Expreſſion.

Once more; in a Paſſage of St. *James* V, 6. where after he had denounc'd wrath and judgment againſt the *Rich and Proud*, he thus concludes, Κατεδικάσατε,

πεδικάσατε, ἐφονεύσατε τ δίκαιον· ὐκ ἀντιτάσσεται ὑμῖν, *Ye have condemned and kill'd the juſt: he doth not reſiſt you:* if inſtead of ΟΥΚ ſome Manuſcript by the change of one Letter ſhould repreſent ΟΚΣ̄, which in the Antient Books is always ſo abbreviated for Ο Κύριος *the Lord:* ſome Perſons would not be ſorry, if what has hitherto appear'd to all Interpreters abrupt, incoherent, and forc'd, ſhould with ſo ſlight a change be made pertinent and proper: *The* LORD *reſiſts, oppoſes, ſets himſelf againſt you.* For ſo St. *James* ſpeaks before, IV, 6. and St. *Peter* 1 Epiſt. V, 5. out of *Prov.* III, 34. Ο ΘΕΟΣ ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, GOD *oppoſeth the proud.* And then the Connexion is apt and juſt in the following verſe; Μακροθυμήσατε ΟΥΝ, *Be patient* THEREFORE, *brethren, unto the coming* τῦ ΚῩ *of the* LORD: exactly as St. *Peter*'s is in the place already cited: *For* GOD *reſiſteth the proud: Humble yourſelves* THEREFORE *under the mighty hand of* GOD.

But to return to our Diſcourſer, and to cloſe up this long *Remark*: it is Fact undeniable, that the Sacred Books have ſuffer'd *no more alteration than Common and Claſſic Authors:* it has been the common Senſe of Men of Letters, that numbers of Manuſcripts do not make a Text *precarious*, but are uſeful nay neceſſary to its Eſtabliſhment and Certainty. And as *Scaliger*, *Caſaubon*, *Heinſius*, &c. when they deſign'd to publiſh a correct Edition of an Author, firſt labor'd to procure all the Manuſcripts they could hear of, as the only means that promis'd laudable ſucceſs: So *Stephanus*, *Junius*, *Curcellaeus*, *Walton*, *Fell*, and *Mill* proceeded in the ſame method. All theſe, except *Stephens* the Printer were Chriſtian *Prieſts*: and what, pray, were they

they doing, with all this pains and labour? Why, according to our wiſe Author, they were confounding their own Scheme. Very magiſterial and deciſive! And yet the comfort is, That in his courteous diſtribution of all Mankind, into *Knaves* and *Fools*, he can neither accuſe the *Clergy* here as playing their *Prieſt-craft*; nor without involving with them the moſt Learned of the *Layety* turn them over to his ſecond Row of *Crackbrain'd* and *Idiots*.

The Reſult of the whole is, That either *a poſteriori* all Antient Books, as well as the Sacred, muſt now be laid aſide as *uncertain and precarious*; or elſe to ſay *a priori*, That all the Tranſcripts of Sacred Books ſhould have been privileg'd againſt the common Fate, and exempted from all Slips and Errors whatever. Which of theſe our Writer and his *new Sect* will cloſe with, I cannot foreſee: there's in each of them ſuch a guſt of the *Paradox* and *Perverſe*, that they equally ſuit with a modern *Free-thinker's* palate: and therefore I ſhall here beſtow a ſhort reflexion on Both.

If all the old Authors are abandon'd by him; there is One compendious Anſwer to this *Diſcourſe of Free-thinking*. For what becomes of his boaſted Paſſages out of *Cicero*, *Plutarch*, and his long Liſt of antient *Free-thinkers*, if the *Text* of each is *precarious*? thoſe Paſſages, as they came from the Author's hands, might be *for* Superſtition, which are now cited *againſt* it. Thus our Writer will be found *Felo de ſe*; unleſs the Coroner to ſave his Effects favours him with his own Titles of *Fool* and *Madman*.

But I have too much value for the Antients, to play booty about their Works and Monuments, for the ſake of a ſhort Anſwer *to a fool according to his folly*. All thoſe Paſſages, and all the reſt of their

Remains are ſufficiently pure and genuine, to make us ſure of the Writer's Deſign. If a corrupt Line or dubious Reading chances to intervene, it does not darken the whole Context, nor make an Author's Opinion or his Purpoſe *precarious*. *Terence* for inſtance, has as many Variations, as any Book whatever in proportion to it's Bulk; and yet with all it's Interpolations, Omiſſions, Additions, or Gloſſes (chuſe the worſt of them on purpoſe) you cannot deface the Contrivance and Plot of one Play; no not of one ſingle Scene; but it's Senſe, Deſign, and Subſerviency to the laſt Iſſue and Concluſion, ſhall be viſible and plain thorow all the Miſt of *Various Lections*. And ſo it is with the Sacred Text; make your 30000 as many more, if numbers of Copies can ever reach that Sum: all the better to a knowing and ſerious Reader, who is thereby more richly furniſh'd to ſelect what he ſees Genuine. But even put them into the hands of a Knave or a Fool: and yet with the moſt ſiniſtrous and abſurd Choice, he ſhall not extinguiſh the Light of any one Chapter, nor ſo diſguiſe Chriſtianity, but that every Feature of it will ſtill be the ſame.

And this has already prevented the laſt Shift and Objection; That Sacred Books at leaſt, Books impos'd upon the World as Divine Laws and Revelations, ſhould have been exempted from the injuries of Time, and ſecur'd from the leaſt Change. For what need of that perpetual Miracle; if with all the preſent Changes, the whole Scripture is perfect and ſufficient, to all the great Ends and Purpoſes of it's firſt Writing? what a Scheme would theſe men make? what worthy Rules would they preſcribe to Providence? That in Millions of Copies tranſcrib'd in ſo many Ages and Nations, all the Notaries and Writers, who made it their Trade and Livelyhood, ſhould

ſhould be infallible and impeccable? That their Pens ſhould ſpontaneouſly write true, or be ſupernaturally guided; though the Scribes were nodding or dreaming? would not this excede all the Miracles of both Old and New Teſtament? And, pray, to what great Uſe or Deſign? To give ſatisfaction to a few obſtinate and untractable Wretches; to thoſe who are not convinc'd *by Moſes and the Prophets*, but want *one from the Dead* to come and convert them. Such men miſtake the methods of Providence, and the very fundamentals of Religion: which draws it's Votaries by the *Cords of a Man*, by rational, ingenuous, and moral Motives; not by conviction Mathematical; not by new evidence Miraculous, to ſilence every doubt and whim, that Impiety and Folly can ſuggeſt. And yet all this would have no effect upon ſuch Spirits and Diſpoſitions: if they now believe not *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*; *neither would they believe*, if their own Schemes were comply'd with.

XXXIII.

But Dr. MILL is not yet diſmiſs'd: * *for he has diſcover'd a Paſſage very little known before*; with which this Author hopes, not *to do any good*, but a great deal of miſcheif. But why, I pray, *diſcover'd*? and why *very little known*? Has not the Paſſage been twice printed in *Victor* above a Hundred years? and a third time above half a Hundred? and over and over in *Iſidorus*'s Chronicon? We'l allow it was *very little known* to this Author and his Sect before: but let not them meaſure all Others by their own narrow and partial Inquiries.

Nay, but even *Father Simon*, * *who has labour'd ſo much to prove the uncertainty of the Text of Scri-*

* *Pag.* 90.

pture, did not light on this Paſſage. Our Writer has found out, you ſee, Father *Simon*'s cover'd Deſign; a true piece of *Popiſh Prieſtcraft*, to confound the Reformation by labouring to prove the Sacred Text precarious: and this avow'd Enemy to all Prieſts and Prieſtcraft concurs openly with that Papiſt in his pious Intention. Now what ſhall we ſay or think of this Conduct? You that live upon the Spot, pray inquire into the Men. Was not one of the Heads of them a *Papiſt*, in the time of your late King *James*? Such a Story goes here at *Leipſic*: and really a Stanger would be tempted to think, that *Popery* rather than *Atheiſm* is the ſecret Cabbala of this *new Sect*. For why ſuch Zeal for bare Atheiſm, if nothing more was behind the Scene? There is no Principle, no Spur, in mere Atheiſm, to make any man act as they do. They confeſs, that the modern * *Free-thinkers are ſure to be hated by* 999 *out of a* 1000. Why then muſt this univerſal Hatred be voluntarily incurr'd by an Atheiſt? Why muſt He expoſe himſelf by his Talking and Printing? To do *Himſelf* good? The very contrary: for if Your Prieſts were really ſuch, as this Writer has deſcrib'd them: his very Life would not be worth a Month's Purchaſe. Or to do *Others* good? Nothing leſs: for what Harm in his Scheme, if men live and dye *Chriſtians*? He cannot tell them, they'l be *damn'd* for't after Death: He can only aim, if men *live* not wickedly enough already, to invite and encourage them to live worſe. A mighty Friend this to Himſelf, and to Human Society.

But take now a mixture of *Popery* into the Scheme of this *new Sect*, and all their odd Steps may be accounted for. 'Tis moſt certain in Fact, That to propagate Atheiſm in Proteſtant Countries has been

* *Pag.* 120.

a Method preſcrib'd and made uſe of by Popiſh Emiſſaries. For they do no *evil* by it in Their Notion; the Men that would have been damn'd for *Hereſy*, are no worſe damn'd for *Atheiſm:* but the *good* of the thing lies open to full view; when Infidelity and an Indifference to All Religion (and Some there muſt and ever will be) muſt needs pave a plain way for the return of Popery; while Zeal and Flame are all on one ſide, and Coldneſs and mere Ice on the other. Let theſe Authors look to it then; and let your Government look to Them. They may take their Option of One of their own Epithets: if *Popery* is the drift of their Sect, (as they really ſerve its Intereſts) they may claim favour to be plac'd among *the Deſigning and Artificial Knaves;* but if naked *Atheiſm* is all they aim at, they are certainly turn'd over without *Benefit of Clergy* to the *Crazy*, *Crackbrain'd*, and *Idiots*.

And now for the Paſſage in *Victor*'s *Chronicon*. with our Author's faithful Tranſlation:

MESSALLA V. C. Coss. Conſtantinopoli, jubente Anaſtaſio Imperatore, Sancta Evangelia, tamquam ab idiotis Evangeliſtis compoſita, reprehenduntur & emendantur.

In the Conſulſhip of MESSALLA, *at the command of the Emperor* ANASTASIUS, *the Holy Goſpels, as written by Idiot Evangeliſts, are corrected and amended.*

Our Writer introduces this Paſſage with a triumphant Remark; That it was done *in the* VI *Century*, and recorded by one who *flouriſh'd in that very Age*. Now this is to poſſeſs the unwary Reader; that *Victor* reports this matter, as within his own knowledge and memory. But *Meſſalla* was *Conſul* in the Weſt *A. D.* DVI: and this little *Chronicon* of a dozen Pages, which might be written in as ſhort a time as my Letter here, ends *A. D.* DLXVI. So that This might be nothing but a Hear-ſay about

a buſineſs ſuppos'd to be done threeſcore years before.

Ab Idiotis Evangeliſtis, *By Idiot Evangeliſts*, ſays our Author; who, if he's ſincere in this Verſion, proves himſelf a very *Idiot* in the *Greek* and *Latin* acceptation of that word. Ἰδιώτης, *Idiota, illiteratus, indoctus, rudis.* See *Du Freſne* in his Gloſſaries; who takes notice, that *Idiota* for an *Idiot* or *Natural Fool* is peculiar to your *Engliſh* Law; for which he cites *Raſtal.* Did *Victor* therefore mean *Idiot Evangeliſts* in your *Engliſh* ſenſe? No: but *illiterate, unlearned.* What then muſt we think of our Author for his ſcandalous Tranſlation here? whether Imputation will he chuſe to lye under; that he knew the meaning of *Victor*, or that he knew it not?

As for the Fact it ſelf, * *a General Alteration of the* IV *Goſpels in the* VI *Century*; though I have no high Opinion of our Author's Penetration, I dare venture to ſay, He himſelf does not believe it. Dr. MILL has taught him better; whoſe words he has honeſtly ſuppreſs'd here, He that makes it one Article againſt your Clergy, their † *Stifling of Paſſages, and mangling of Books.* ¶ *'Tis as certain,* ſays the Doctor, *as certain can be; that no ſuch alter'd Goſpels were ever made public. What Tumults, what Tragedies would they have rais'd? They would have coſt that hated Emperor his Crown and his Life. The Fact would have been ſpoken of and deteſted by All the Hiſtorians, and not be found only* (as it is: for *Iſidore* profeſſes to take it from *Victor*) *in one blind paſſage of a puny Chronicle.*

Add to theſe Reaſons of my Dead Friend; that we have plain demonſtration, no ſuch *Alter'd Goſpels* obtain'd in the World: as this writer would inſinuate. For we have the Fathers of IV whole Centuries before that time, both in the *Greek* and *Latin*

* *Pag.* 90. † *Pag.* 95, 96. ¶ *Millii Proleg.* p. 98.

Church

Church; among All whom there's ſcarce a Verſe in the New Teſtament uncited: the Agreement of which with the *MSS* yet extant does fully evince, that the Copies continu'd the ſame after *Anaſtaſius*'s time as before. Add the intire Commentaries of *Auſtin*, *Jerom*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Cyrill*, *Theodoret*, and more, all dead before the VI Century commenc'd: and yet their *Text* is the ſame as now; and their Explications ſo confirm and fix it, that That could not be alter'd in Their Books (as is ſuppos'd in the naked Scripture) without making the Commentaries anew. Add again the Latin *Italic* and *Jerom*'s Verſions, add others in the Eaſt, all before the date of this pretended *general Alteration:* and he muſt be a mere *Idiot* indeed, that can believe that Story; when he ſees all thoſe antecedent Books ſo exactly agree with the ſubſequent.

That this *General Alteration* is a mere Dream and *Chimera*, may be known even *a priori* by any man of Common Senſe. For if the thing was really effected, and the very Bibles of *Victor* and *Iſidore* (with all the reſt) were ſo alter'd and corrupted beyond retrieve; what could thoſe men mean, to tranſmit that Fact to Poſterity? Or what Copyer would not have *ſtifled thoſe Paſſages* in them both? Suppoſe, in our *Free-thinker*'s Scheme, that all the World at that time were *Knaves* and *Fools* enough to comply with it: yet ſurely they would not have told Us it: they would not have branded Themſelves to all Ages; not ſo abus'd the *Evangeliſts*, whom they look'd on as Inſpir'd; not root up and *deſtroy* that Religion, which this very pretended Fact deſign'd to *recommend.*

Our modeſt Writer, who affirms of himſelf, * *That he* MUST *be one of the moſt Underſtanding*

* † *Pag.* 120.

and

and Virtuous Men alive, has given no good Inſtance of Either in his management of this Paſſage: for he has left out a Principal word, both in his *Latin* and *Engliſh*, and which MILL as well as *Victor* lay'd before his eyes; that will clear up this whole affair. CONSTANTINOPOLI, at CONSTANTINOPLE, ſays *Victor*, *the Goſpels were amended.* Was this a *General Alteration*? Did this involve the whole Chriſtian World? Would *Theodoric*, then reigning in the Weſt, have ſubmitted to this Order of *Anaſtaſius*, a weak and unpopular Prince, that was ſcarce obey'd by his own Guards? But the Story it ſelf pretends to no more, than the City of the Emperor's Reſidence: and if our Author did not ſee this, where was his *Underſtanding*? if he did, and *ſtifled* the word by deſign, where was his *Virtue*?

You ſee, the matter dwindles to nothing; even allowing the whole Fact in *Victor*'s meaning to be true. But I can never believe ſo wicked and ſenſleſs a Thought, of that Emperor or any Chriſtian whatever. He was hated indeed univerſally, for adhering to Heretics, and for his ill conduct in Civil Government: and ſo any Story was entertain'd with Joy, that would make him ſtill more odious, and blacken his Character. But I fancy, I can give you a clear account of the occaſion and riſe of this Scandal; out of *Liberatus* the Deacon, of the ſame Age and Country with *Victor*, in the XIX Ch. of his *Breviarium*.

Hoc tempore Macedonius Conſtantinopolitanus Epiſcopus ab Imperatore Anaſtaſio dicitur expulſus, tamquam Evangelia falſaſſet, & maxime illud Apoſtoli dictum, *Qui apparuit in carne, juſtificatus eſt in Spiritu.* Hunc enim immutaſſe, ubi habet Ο Σ, id eſt QUI, monoſyllabum Graecum; litera mutata Ο in Θ vertiſſe, & feciſſe Θ Σ, id eſt ut eſſet,

DEUS

DEUS *apparuit per carnem.* Tanquam Neſtorianus ergo culpatus expellitur per Severum Monachum.

The Editions of *Liberatus*, inſtead of Θ and ΘΣ have Ω and ΩΣ: but it appears from *Baronius*, that the Manuſcript had no *Greek* Letters here at all; and that They were ſupply'd by the firſt Editor. I have not ſcrupl'd therefore to correct the Place, as the *Latin* clearly requires; for DEUS anſwers to ΘΕΟΣ, and the Greek *Monoſyllable* ΟΣ is in oppoſition to that *Diſyllable*. And ſo *Hincmarus* in his *Opuſculum* Chap. XVIII, where he recites the ſame Story (without doubt out of *Liberatus*) has it plainly, as I have put it, Ο *in* Θ *vertit & fecit* ΘΣ.

The Account is this: *Macedonius Patriarch of Conſtantinople was charg'd by the Emperor* Anaſtaſius *as a Falſary, that had alter'd and interpolated ſeveral paſſages of the New Teſtament in the Copies us'd in that City; and particularly that in the* 1 Tim. III. 16. *he had order'd* ΘΣ *to be writen inſtead of* ΟΣ: *and for that crime of Falſification he was depriv'd and baniſh'd.*

Macedonius might really do this; and where any Copies had it ΟΣ, he might order to correct it ΘΣ by a ſmall ſtroke of the Pen. That the Copies did vary here of old is moſt certain: and there's one in the *Colbertin* Library, that has it ΟΣ at this day. But 'tis certain, that *Macedonius* was not the firſt Introducer of that Reading: many Antient Fathers citing and explaining it ΘΣ, before He was born.

Now any Reader (I preſume) even our Author himſelf will grant me; That if *Macedonius* was baniſh'd for falſifying theſe Copies; *Anaſtaſius* would give Orders, to have the true Readings (in his O-

Pinion) reſtor'd: and that all the Copies in *Conſtantinople* ſhould be ſought for and *amended*.

And here, if I miſtake not, is the whole Ground and Riſe of the Story in *Victor*. For the true Fact being no more than this, that *Anaſtaſius* order'd the *Copies* to be amended, Tamquam ab Idiotis Librariis conſcripta, *as written by ignorant Scribes*; the Story grew in the Telling, when it was got as far as *Afric*, on purpoſe to blacken him, That he order'd the *Originals* to be amended, Tamquam ab idiotis Evangeliſtis compoſita, *as made by ignorant Evangeliſts*.

It does not leſſen the Probability of this, That *Victor* ſpeaks only of *Evangelia, the Goſpels*: for that's the word both in *Liberatus* and *Hincmare*, EVANGELIA *falſaſſet*, even where they ſpecify the Epiſtle to *Timothy*. So that *Goſpels*, in the common acception of thoſe times, were meant of the whole *New Teſtament*.

But I think the Probability is much increas'd, by this obvious reflexion; that no One Author tells both theſe Stories: *Victor*, who has tranſmitted down the greater Reproach, ſays not a word of the leſs: and *Liberatus*, who has publiſh'd the Fairer Story, is ſilent about the Blaſphemous one. So that in their firſt Original, they were but One and the Same.

TANTUM.

Honour'd Sir,

You will ſee all along in my Letter, without my telling it now, that I deſign'd to have diſpatch'd at once all my Obſervations upon this famous Treatiſe. But finding my ſelf here in His xc. page, the very Middle of the Book; and my Remarks having ſo grown under my hands that they are already full heavy enough for the Poſt: I chuſe to make up this preſent Packet, and leave the reſt to another Occaſion. I my ſelf am of opinion, that this Half is as much as the Whole: the Author's Virtues and Abilities, his Honeſty and his Learning are made already as apparent as even a Second Letter can make them: for his whole *Diſcourſe* is but one uniform Series of Inſincerity and Ignorance, of Juggle and Blunder. However, if I underſtand, that This Letter has come ſafe to your Hands, and that Another would be ſerviceable to Religion, or acceptable to the *Engliſh Clergy*, for whoſe Honour though a Foreigner I have the greateſt regard; You may certainly command

Your moſt obedient

Leipſic *Jan.* 26.
New Stile.

humble Servant

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS.

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